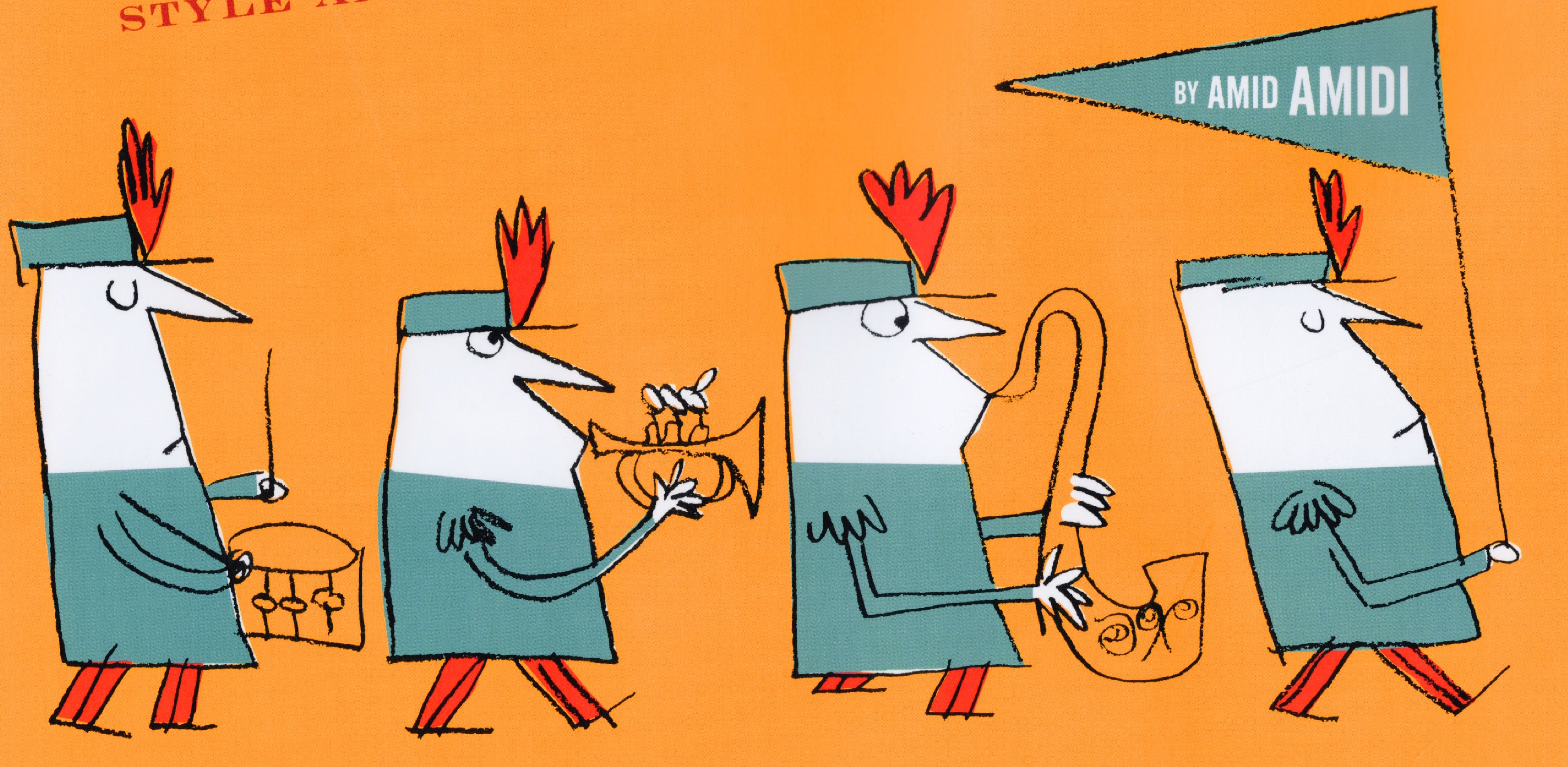
CARTOON MODERN

STYLE AND DESIGN IN FIFTIES ANIMATION



BY AMID AMIDI

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Bridging the years between the golden age of 1940s Hollywood theatrical animation and the pop cartoon television shows of the 1960s, the 1950s were one of the most pivotal decades in animation history. Often overlooked, this period heralded the advent—in animation as in so many other disciplines—of an entirely new visual vocabulary. Drawing upon modern design and the contemporary styles of the time, animation artists challenged and transformed the traditional "lifelike" cartoon forms that had defined animation up to that time. Adopting a sophisticated and stylized graphic language, the animators of the 1950s would overhaul every aspect of the animated cartoon.

Amid Amidi, award-winning author and animation historian, gathers hundreds of rare and forgotten sketches, storyboards, paintings, cels, and film stills to re-create this essential chapter in the history of animation. *Cartoon Modern* charts the evolution of the modernist style, exploring how the mid-century graphic sensibility permeated every kind of animated film, from theatrical features to TV commercials to corporate propaganda cartoons. Drawing upon a wide range of original interviews and research, Amidi revives the often lost or obscured contributions of many masters of 1950s animation design, including Ward Kimball, John Hubley, Tom Oreb, Sterling Sturtevant, Bobe Cannon, Maurice Noble, Ed Benedict, Eyvind Earle, and Ernie Pintoff. Examining their diverse and distinctive approaches to modern design, *Cartoon Modern* also looks at how the design movement spread internationally in the 1960s and the lasting impact of 1950s animation design on today's animation artists and illustrators.

Cartoon Modern is a thoroughly researched, eye-popping, and delightful account of what is only now emerging as perhaps the most critical era in animation design as we know it today.

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STYLE AND DESIGN IN FIFTIES ANIMATION

By Amid Amidi

CHRONICLE BOOKS
SAN FRANCISCO

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Perfection is achieved not when there is nothing more to add,
but when there is nothing left to take away.

— *Antoine de Saint-Exupéry*

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I always imagined the book writing process to be a solitary craft, and while in some respects that perception held true, it became obvious early on that to turn out a book of any depth and scope, a massive team effort would be required. I've approached many people for assistance over the past few years, and to my pleasant surprise everybody has been invariably helpful and munificent with their time and materials. Dozens of fine individuals pitched in during every phase of *Cartoon Modern*, with the finished product owing greatly to their generosity. At the top, I want to mention a few individuals who have been crucial to realizing this book:

Mark Frauenfelder, founder of one of my favorite Web sites BoingBoing.net, provided the introduction to Chronicle Books and got the ball rolling on this whole project.

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***Toot Whistle Plunk and Boom* (1953)**
Directors: Ward Kimball and C. August Nichols
Film still

INTRODUCTION

Disney director Ward Kimball sits in an outdoor Parisian cafe. He casually sips a glass of wine while writing out the following decree on a blank piece of paper: "I'm thru with that Thomas Nast realist crap." On the table, there are also a couple of unmistakably abstract drawings scattered about, an unequivocal proclamation of the new direction Kimball has chosen over a fussy, figurative nineteenth-century cartooning style.

The incident, of course, never occurred . . . at least not in Paris. It was a gag cartoon drawn by Kimball's colleague at Disney, Tom Oreb, during the early 1940s. The cartoon clearly represented the frustrating gap between what animation was at that time and what many artists believed it had the potential of being. One decade later, both Kimball and Oreb were on the cutting edge of modern animation design, making films that they could only have dreamed about when Oreb had drawn that cartoon a few years earlier.

Cartoon Modern seeks to establish the place of 1950s animation design in the great Modernist tradition of the arts. A remarkable group of contemporary talents worked in animation during this period. A handful of them are still known names today, including Ward Kimball, John Hubley, Ed Benedict, and Maurice Noble. Others, such as Cliff Roberts, Sterling Sturtevant, and Abe Liss, barely register on the radar of even the most knowledgeable animation aficionados and historians, never mind the general public. And there are those like Bobe Cannon, Bill Hurtz, Eyvind Earle, and Ernie Pintoff, whose names are familiar to many but whose contributions to 1950s design are only vaguely understood. It is hoped that readers will emerge from this book with a clearer understanding of the work of these varied individuals—directors, designers, layout and background artists, and animators—who gave animated films an unprecedented sense of style and modernity.

The new look of cartoons during the 1950s stemmed largely from the desire of animation artists to move beyond the slapstick routines and "hurt gags" that had been the stock-in-trade of American animated filmmakers up until that time, and instead use the language of animation to convey contemporary ideas and themes. Modern design was the ideal vehicle for delivering this new, mature brand of animated film, and it provided a way for filmmakers to instantly distinguish their cartoons from the conventional animated standard. Animation artists conceived a bold visual style that was derived from the modern arts, assimilating and adapting the principles of Cubism, Surrealism, and Expressionism into the realm of animation and in the process expanding and redefining the notion of the art form. The list of modern influences on animation artists is diverse: background painter Bob McIntosh cites his big three inspirations—Picasso, Matisse, and Miró; designer-animator Fred Crippen loved magazine illustrators Saul Steinberg and Virgil "Vip" Partch; designer-director Gene Deitch was a disciple of record-cover illustrator Jim Flora; while designer-director John Hubley and designer Tom Oreb were fans of another celebrated record-cover artist, David Stone Martin. The industry also opened its doors to outside talents during the 1950s, and Modernists of the time from diverse disciplines were called upon to contribute to animated films: illustrators like Saul Steinberg, R. O. Blechman, and Ronald Searle designed films; Oscar Peterson, Shorty Rogers, and Art Blakey contributed jazz scores; Saul Bass, Jules Feiffer, and Charles Eames all worked on animated projects.

A designer from that period, Ray Favata, recalls an evening in the early 1950s when his boss, Tempo Productions studio owner David Hilberman, had convened a meeting of illustrators in a New York hotel room. The illustrious group of names gathered included Robert Osborn, Harry Diamond, William Steig, and André François. The purpose of the meeting was to figure out ways

Tom Oreb (center) and Ward Kimball (far right) at Disney in the early 1940s. They would both play important roles in the shift toward modern design in 1950s animation. Other Disney staffers in the photo are (left to right) Joe Greenhalgh, Virgil Partch, and Daisy Mae Debney.

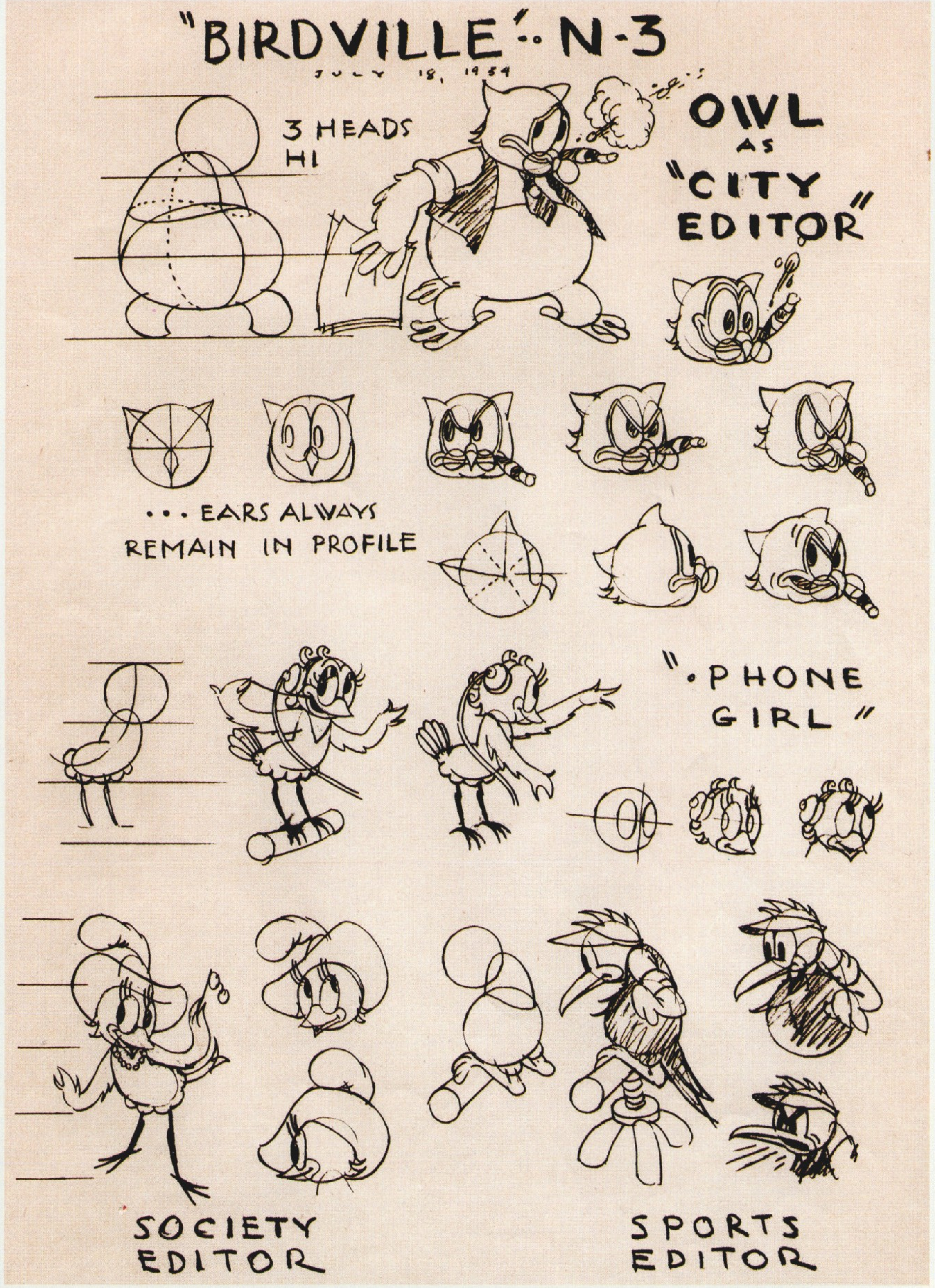
of utilizing these artists in the animation business. Though nothing resulted from this particular meeting, it is indicative of the expansive thinking of animation artists during this time and their efforts to inject new styles and graphic viewpoints into the art form.

Rather than simply recycling the graphic statements of others as many commercial and popular artists do, animation artists adapted this contemporary graphic language in fresh new ways that were uniquely suited to the medium of animation, a technique that requires the artist to design movement in time as well as space. Unlike painters, illustrators, and graphic designers, who design art from static viewpoints, animation artists designed for motion. “We were designing in terms of length,” layout artist Maurice Noble said. “We were teasing the eye with the way the color and the actions and the accents happened in a continuity on the screen, so in the end we got a total composition.”

Beyond movement, animation also encompasses drawing, painting, graphic design, narrative, and cinematic techniques. During the 1950s, animation artists explored new ways of merging these disparate practices into a powerful sum expression. Gene Deitch, who started his career at United Productions of America (UPA), the leading progressive animation studio of the period, offered an insight into the expansive studies of modern thought undertaken by animation artists throughout the decade: “We were heavily influenced by two Hungarians and a Russian: graphically by Gyorgy Kepes and his book, *The Language of Vision*, story construction by Lajos Egri and his book, *The Art of Dramatic Writing*, and cinematic scenography by V. I. Pudovkin in his book, *Film Acting*.”

The Disney Style and the “Centerline School”

To best appreciate 1950s animation design, one needs to first examine the state of the industry in the decades leading up to the 1950s. The reigning American animation studio during the 1930s and 1940s was Walt Disney Productions, and the “Disney style” was mimicked by almost every other theatrical animation studio in business (the Fleischer Studios in New York being the notable exception, though they too had succumbed to Disney by the time of their 1939 feature *Gulliver's Travels*). The Disney style was firmly entrenched in nineteenth-century pictorial realism with the aim of creating an “illusion of life.” As the studio's films began to feature increasingly nuanced character animation and realistically rendered backgrounds, they also began to look more like live action; the fantastic worlds that the studio created in its early features, like *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937), *Pinocchio* (1940), *Dumbo* (1941), and *Bambi*



A 1934 model sheet for a Van Beuren theatrical short. The centerline school of character design that dominated the animation industry during the 1930s and 1940s is readily apparent in these Van Beuren characters.

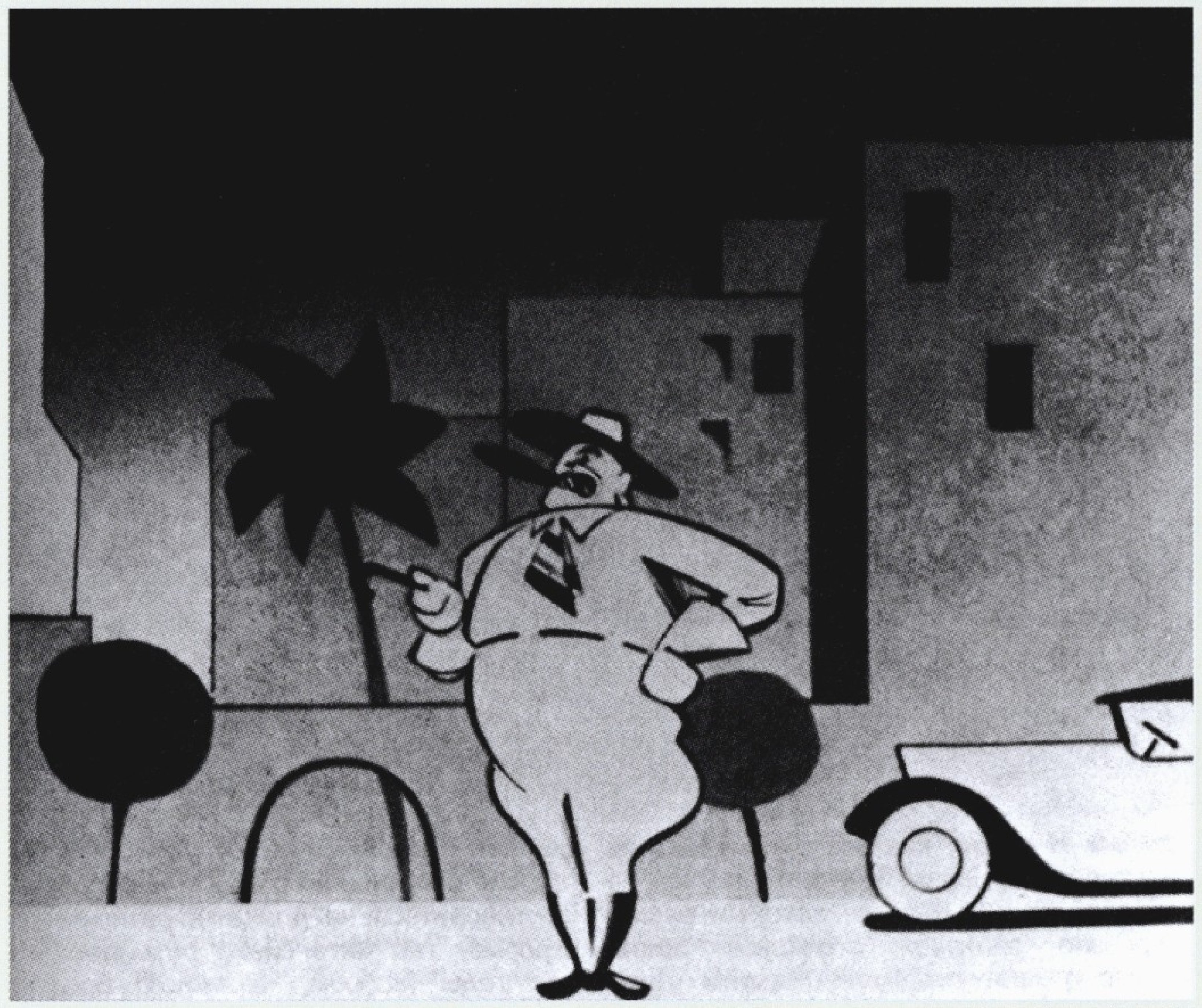
(1942), were always rooted in "a foundation of fact," per Walt Disney's orders, and the drive for realism often trumped the graphic possibilities inherent in the art form.

To achieve the believable look that Disney wanted, his artists studied the works of illustrators like Heinrich Kley, T. S. Sullivant, and Jean-Ignace-Isidore Grandville. Walt Disney even employed a number of classically trained European illustrators during the 1930s, including Albert Hurter, Kay Nielsen, Ferdinand Horvath, and Gustaf Tenggren (Disney unsuccessfully tried to hire famed turn-of-the-last-century English illustrator Arthur Rackham). The work of these artists was marvelously creative to be sure, but their quaint rendering techniques and sentimental clutter couldn't have been further removed from the vanguard of modernity led by the likes of Picasso, Miró, Matisse, Klee, and Léger. As early as 1943, Ralph M. Pearson complained in his book *Experiencing American Pictures* that "[Disney] does not know modern pictorial design. And he and his artists slump into banal, conventional stereotypes in many of their drawings—stereotypes which, with their obvious, pretty curves, lack character both as representatives of subject and as pattern or design."

When Disney and MGM animator Preston Blair wrote his classic animation textbook, simply titled *Animation*, he explained:

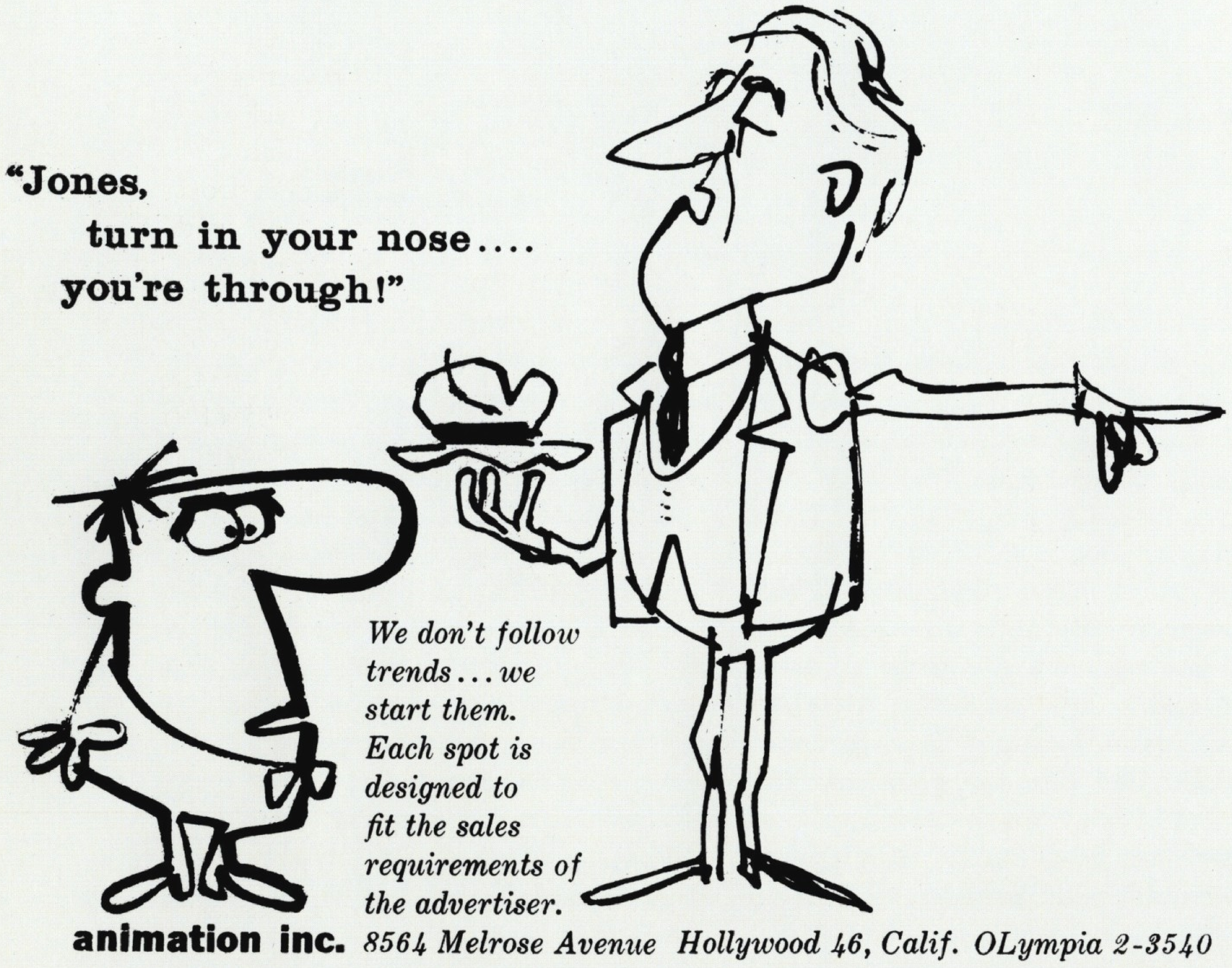
> *The animated cartoon character is based on the circular, rounded form. In a cartoon studio several people may work on the same drawing and the rounded form is used because of its simplicity—it makes animation easier. Also, circular forms "follow through" better on the screen.*

Blair conveniently breaks down character construction into balls, ovals, eggs, and pear shapes. The facial features and details are anchored to the circular shapes via centerlines that indicate placement. This centerline approach to character design was pervasive throughout the animation industry in the 1930s and 1940s. One need only look at the creations of the various studios: Disney's Donald Duck and Pinocchio, Warner Bros.' Bugs Bunny and Porky Pig, MGM's Tom & Jerry and Droopy, Terrytoons's Mighty Mouse—these characters are all based on the exact same, conventional circular formulas and centerline construction that Blair teaches in his book. The reliance on circles was not only a graphic dead end, but in the words of UPA director–designer Bill Hurtz, "Excessive curvilinearity could be said to be vulgar, because it's the epitome of the crumpled, the doughy, the *schlumpen*, the inelegant."



It is interesting to note that in other countries during the 1930s, where Disney's influence had not yet taken hold, there was a flowering of graphic styling in animation. Russian artists Ivan Ivanov-Vano and Leonid Amalrik directed *Black and White* (1933), and Englishman Anthony Gross and American financier Hector Hoppin produced *La Joie de Vivre* (1934) in Paris. These European films are a wild deviation from the Disney style; it is remarkable to think that they were created during the same period that Disney was producing *The Three Little Pigs* (1933) and *The Tortoise and the Hare* (1934). To be fair, Walt Disney and these European filmmakers had divergent goals for their films: the Disney films focused largely on creating relatable characters with expressive personalities and attitudes, whereas the European shorts were more concerned with communicating ideas and messages, with little regard afforded to personality animation. Nevertheless, the European shorts illustrate an approach to animation that was completely alien to American animation artists at the time. Both *Black and White* and *La Joie de Vivre* feature strong graphic caricatures of human beings, drawn in a fine art manner, with nary a trace of ovals and pears. In *La Joie de Vivre*, humans float through the air in abstract motions; in *Black and White*, there is a graphic use of patterning in the backgrounds. The first exposure of American animators to this graphic cartooning approach was in the late 1930s, when architect Frank Lloyd Wright visited the Disney studio with a print of the Russian cartoon *The Tale of Czar Durandai*,

Above: ***Black and White* (1933)**
Directors: Ivan Ivanov-Vano and
Leonid Amalrik


"Jones,
turn in your nose....
you're through!"

We don't follow trends... we start them. Each spot is designed to fit the sales requirements of the advertiser.

animation inc. *8564 Melrose Avenue Hollywood 46, Calif. OLympia 2-3540*

This mid-1950s trade advertisement by Animation, Inc. pokes fun at the prevalence (some might say excess) of big-nosed cartoon characters in animated advertising of the time.

directed by Ivan Ivanov-Vano and scored by Dmitri Shostakovich. John Hubley, then a layout artist at Disney, recalls the excitement generated by this film among the studio's graphically oriented artists. Hubley also remarked that, unsurprisingly, Walt Disney himself wasn't much impressed with the film.

ELEMENTS OF ANIMATION DESIGN

At the outset, it is important not only to define clearly the ideas and concepts that shaped the modern cartoon aesthetic but also to reject the simplifications and stereotypes that have already formed about 1950s animation design. It is not uncommon to read or hear comments that animation design of that era is all "flat" or "angular" or "minimalist," but such generalizations misrepresent the breadth and richness of the work that was being produced. Bill Hurtz explained in a 1977 interview that a designed cartoon can mean almost anything:

> *People say that a picture is "designy" when they recognize right away that it's under a control, and that it has definite emphasis on some elements or principles of art. A film is all textures, or a film is hard-edged shapes, or a film is limited to several colors. Any conscious limitation of elements, people right away notice.*

This graphic diversity to which Hurtz alludes was tied together by a number of unifying visual characteristics that can be found in many (though not all) designed cartoons of the era:

CHARACTER DESIGN. Walt Disney believed that characters should be "live, individual personalities—not just animated drawings." But 1950s animation designers embraced the fact that cartoons were, in fact, a visual composition of lines and shapes drawn upon and seen in two dimensions. Designers discarded the earlier reliance on circle and oval graphic formulas and created cartoon characters with a variety of sophisticated "modern" elements, including hard-edged Cubist shapes and organic biomorphic forms reminiscent of Miró, Calder, and Noguchi. There was often an absence of a clear-cut centerline, affording artists the freedom to design characters with unconventional graphic structures. Designers also placed renewed emphasis on the linear nature of the medium, and the use of line was more pronounced, often playing as important a role in delineating character as shapes and forms.

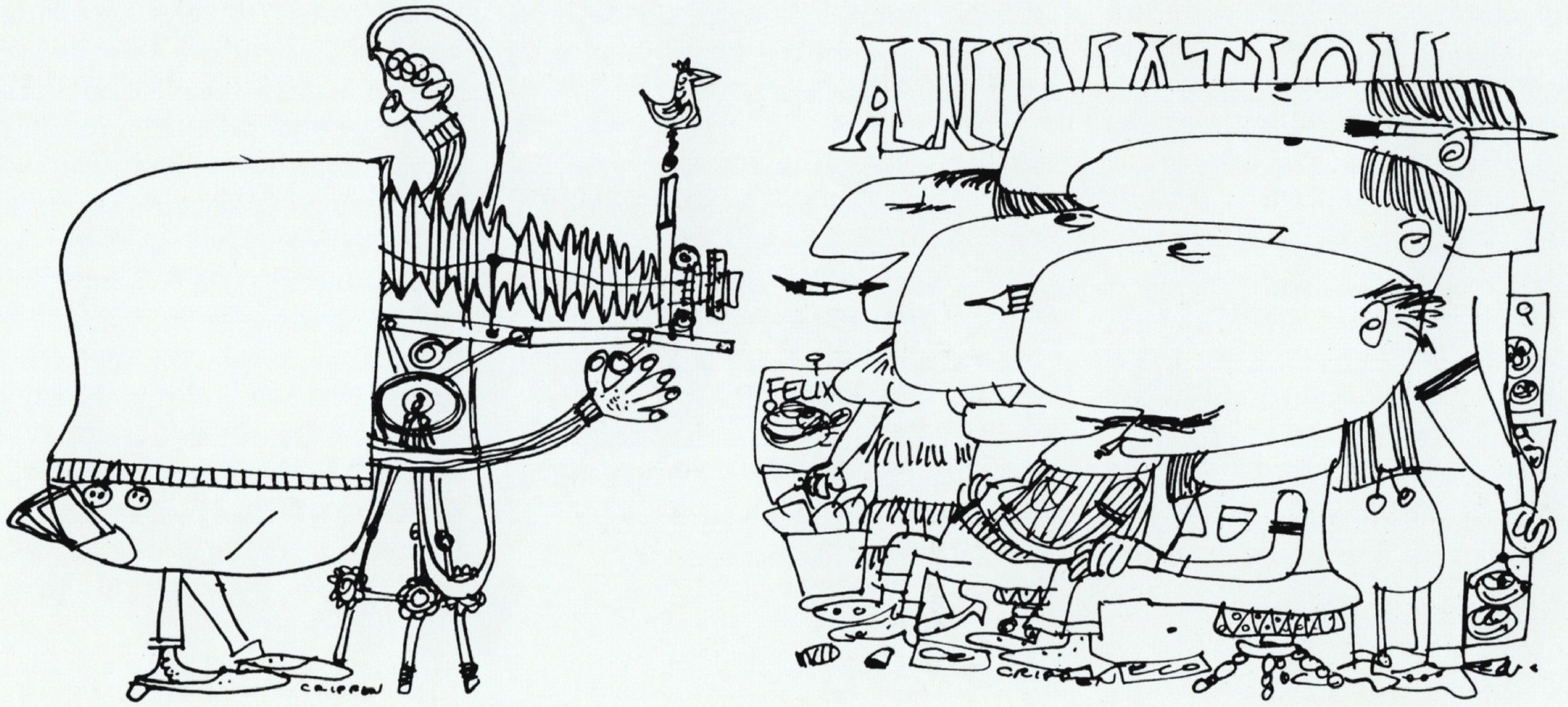
ANIMATION. Fifties animation featured a more stylized, often abstract, approach to movement. Like a jazz musician who improvises a melody to the point of abstraction, but ultimately returns to a recognizable tune, the best animators of the 1950s—including Emery Hawkins, Bill Littlejohn, Duane Crowther, and Rod Scribner—distorted characters frame by frame in creative, unexpected ways before returning the character design to its original state. Another exemplar of stylized movement was director-animator Bobe Cannon, who reveled in designing complex patterns of motion that carried his characters through scenes in a manner as intricately orchestrated as any ballet. There was another school of animation, exemplified by director Ward Kimball and his crew of animators at Disney, who explored a stylized approach to animation by selectively animating parts of a character while keeping the other parts of the figure still. This stylized approach was later adapted into the nonartistic "limited animation" technique used in television animation, a cost-cutting measure in which characters moved only when absolutely essential.

Background Layout. Backgrounds were drawn with little attempt at re-creating a three-dimensional setting, and academic perspective was considered old hat. Settings implied space in the abstract manner of painters like Raoul Dufy and Stuart Davis; it was no longer considered necessary to indicate every piece of wood grain on a piece of furniture or detail every piece of foliage in a forest. When art critic Aline Louchheim reviewed the UPA animated shorts, she observed that emptiness had become a positive value, and that "a few architectural motifs or a single, telling prop" could have the same dramatic effect as any ornately detailed background. Whereas in the traditional Hollywood cartoon, backgrounds and scene composition were perfunctory in nature, they now served a vital role in establishing mood and furthering the narrative. The UPA studio was referred to as the "Layout and Background Studio" by other artists in the industry because of its almost religious devotion to designing backgrounds and settings.

Background Painting. Background layouts were no longer painted with realistic textures and photographically accurate shadows and lighting effects. Flat areas of color and patterning became common features of background painting. Slick rendering techniques like airbrush were replaced with more raw painterly approaches like sponge texturing. It was no longer considered a mistake to show your technique; background painters drew attention to their materials by making the brush strokes and layers of paint visible in their work. Color was used consciously to create dramatic or emotional effect; it was applied expressively with an unprecedented playfulness and creative freedom. At UPA, painters were given the credit "Color" instead of "Backgrounds," emphasizing the important role that color played in their films. "I used color, so the character was never in front of a background. The character was always in the background," explained UPA painter Jules Engel. "So color was not something behind a character; color was part of the story."

It's a Small (Screen) World

Animation in the 1950s not only looked different, it was seen differently as well. Prior to the 1950s, animated cartoons were shown primarily in movie theaters as six- or seven-minute short subjects that



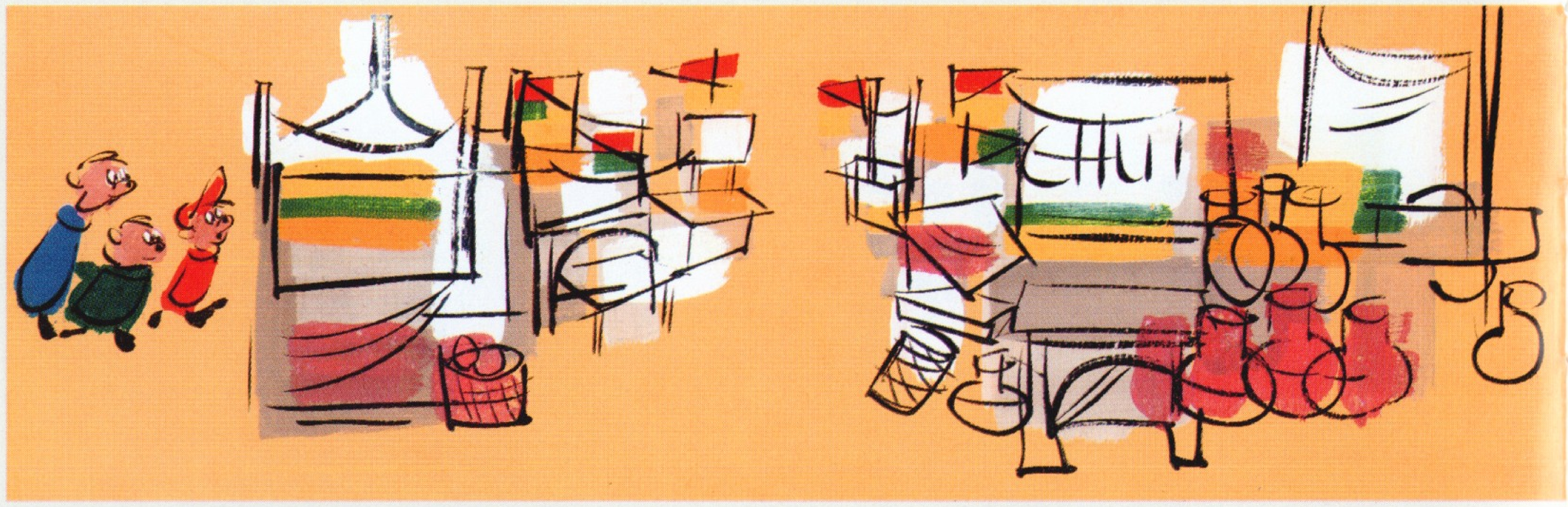
Few animation designers drew noses bigger than those of Fred Crippen's drawings.

preceded live-action features. During the 1950s, Hollywood cartoon studios gradually phased out the theatrical short, a response to rising production costs, diminishing financial returns, and changing film distribution laws (notably, the end of block booking, which forced theaters to screen a studio's shorts along with its features). The animated cartoon, however, found new life with the advent of television. Cartoons now began showing up in people's homes on a daily basis. In the early and mid-1950s, animation was used extensively in commercial advertising and on television specials (such as the *Bell Science* series and the *Disneyland* "Tomorrowland" space episodes).

The demand for animated TV commercials was such that between the mid-1940s and the end of the 1950s, more than three-dozen new animation studios were formed. These studios were in addition to the in-house commercial divisions started by many of the old-guard studios like Disney and Terrytoons. The new studios included Academy Pictures, Animation Inc., Bill Sturm Studios, Cartoon Films Ltd., Cascade Pictures, Elektra Films, Era Productions, Filmfair, Fine Arts Films, Gifford-Kim Animation, Grantray-Lawrence Animation, Pantomime Pictures, Pelican Films, Pintoff Productions, Playhouse Pictures, Quartet Films, Ray Patin Productions, Robert Lawrence Productions, Sherm Glas Productions, Storyboard, Tempo Productions, Transfilm, and TV Spots. These studios offered television spots in a wide variety of animation styles ranging from the modern look to the traditional, center-line school of animation design.

Though television commercials were at their core a mercantile practice aimed at selling products, animation artists used the opportunity to explore modern design in a way that had been impossible in animated shorts. For much of the 1950s, artists were able to exercise significant control over the look of the commercials because of the unfamiliarity of advertising agencies with the animation process. Additionally, a certain quality was possible with the generous production budgets: an average one-minute TV commercial in the mid-1950s cost between eight and nine thousand dollars. Top creative talents in the business, like John Hubley and Abe Liss, could command up to eighteen thousand dollars for a minute of animation.

Television advertising demanded that animators communicate with audiences within a more condensed time span than the average theatrical short, in black and white and on a vastly reduced screen size to boot. These requirements demanded a simplified graphic language that could be read quickly by the eye while retaining its core graphic appeal. As a result, characters were increasingly designed with thicker outlines for legibility and often with disproportionately large heads and facial features to accentuate their expressions, enabling viewers to engage with them emotionally. In a magazine article from the late 1950s, director-designer John Hubley offered additional thoughts on how the television medium was forcing animation artists to adapt their art:



> *Action patterns have become abbreviated, "a pop on" technique, strong poses, staccato rhythms have resulted in freeing the medium and to an extent, adding forcefulness. There has also been a change in the design of cartoon characters; an exploration of variations of human forms. Since most paying sponsors are not inclined to appeal to and associate their products with animals—animators have of necessity developed interesting ways of creating human beings. Cats, mice and bunnies have given way to a breed of round nosed people of odd shapes, sizes and voices. Jumping from soap bubbles to loan companies in rapid order has helped artists become flexible. They have learned to solve drawing problems in a variety of ways.*

Animation played a crucial role in Madison Avenue's efforts to break away from the antiquated "hard sell" advertising technique and instead woo viewers with lighthearted wit and whimsy. Hardly a kids-only marketing gimmick in those days, animated characters hawked anything and everything that could be unloaded onto the postwar-era's swelling legions of middle-class consumers. During peak years in the 1950s, it has been estimated that one out of every four ads on television was animated. Cartoon spokespeople sung the praises of cigarettes and beer, gasoline and auto parts, banking services, insurance, lipstick, coffee, and even portable barbeques and fertilizer. Television commercials spawned a whole new group

Above: A background concept by Jules Engel for *The Alvin Show* (1961). Animation modernists like Engel attempted to maintain the spirit of 1950s design in the early years of TV series animation, but by the mid-1960s, meager budgets and harried production schedules had wiped out most opportunities for thoughtful design in TV animation.

of cartoon stars in the 1950s, including Bert & Harry Piel (Piels Beer), Marky Maypo (Maypo maple-syrup-flavored oat cereal), Bucky Beaver (Ipana Toothpaste), Fresh-Up Freddie (7-Up), the Hamm's Beer Bear, and the Ford Dog.

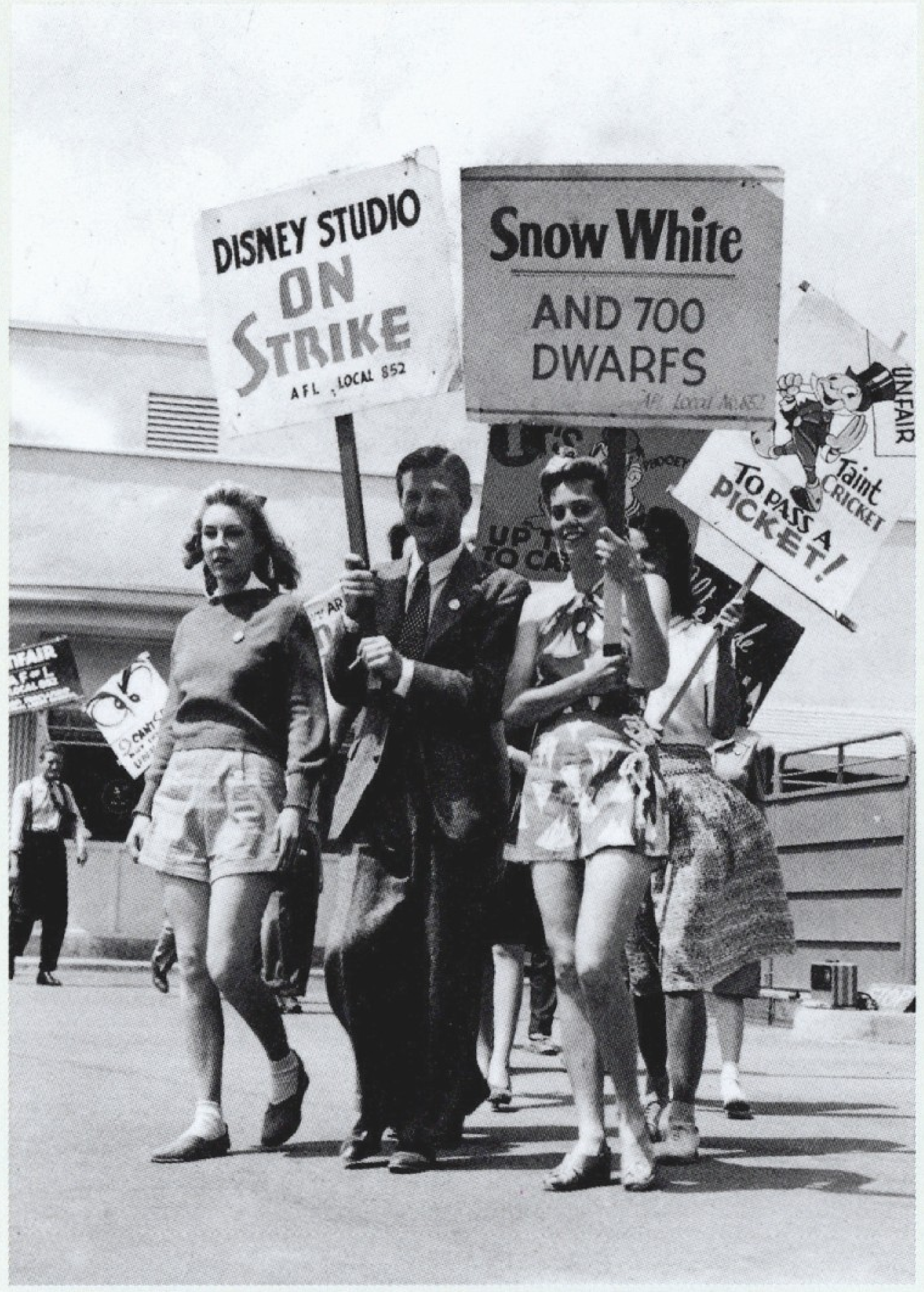
Even bigger television cartoon stars emerged in the late 1950s and early 1960s, when animated series became a staple of television programming. These iconic characters include Tom Terrific (introduced in 1957), Huckleberry Hound and Yogi Bear (1958), Rocky and Bullwinkle (1959), the Flintstones (1960), and Alvin and the Chipmunks (1961). The animated series produced during this period were more limited in movement than anything Hollywood had produced before. Budgets were pitifully meager—for example, the original per-half-hour budget of *Rocky and His Friends* was $8,520, less than what many TV commercial studios were receiving for one minute of animation. And yet most of these early television series managed to be entertaining because they were created by talented artists who treated the limited budgets not as a handicap but as a creative challenge. The artistic leads of shows like *Tom Terrific, Rocky and His Friends,* and *The Alvin Show* were all veterans of the animation studio UPA, and these artists applied many of UPA's modern design principles for these early limited animation shows, lending the cartoons a credence of artistic integrity that was lacking in much of the TV animation that followed in the 1960s.

Roots of 1950s Animation Design

The leading design-oriented studio during the 1950s was United Productions of America (UPA), but like much of Hollywood animation, UPA's origins took root at the industry's eight-hundred-pound gorilla, the Disney studio. During the height of the Depression, in the mid-1930s, when jobs throughout the country were scarce, Walt Disney was expanding his studio at a brisk clip, staffing up to produce his first feature, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937). The studio managed to attract an incredible array of artists from around the country, many of whom were art school educated with fine-art ambitions and had only taken jobs in animation out of economic necessity during the Depression.

This unconventional breed of artist quickly grew disenchanted with the heavy-handed academic realism and limited graphic palette of Disney animation. Zach Schwartz, a young layout artist and art director at the studio, recalled an incident while he was working on *Fantasia* (1940) where he showed Walt Disney books about Greek vases and Persian miniatures with the hope that Disney would consider a more graphic approach to his films. Schwartz remembered telling Disney, "There's no reason why you can't have a god Pan who is emerald green, and all of his details are white line. You don't have to use realistic colors; you can design your characters and backgrounds so that the end result will be a picture unlike anything anyone has ever seen before." Walt wasn't interested in Schwartz's sales pitch. In fairness to Disney, though, he wasn't completely indifferent to the possibilities of a contemporary look. Modern design surfaced occasionally in Disney films, such as the "Baby Weems" segment of *The Reluctant Dragon* (1941) and the "Pink Elephants on Parade" sequence in *Dumbo* (1941), but "Walt wasn't interested in style as style," storyman Leo Salkin once commented. Modern animation styling was used sparingly at Disney and only when it was in the service of the story and characters.

Further fueling discontent among the Disney artists were the studio's estimable group of in-house instructors, including Don Graham, Rico Lebrun, Bernard Garbutt, Phil Dike, and Eugene Fleury. These teachers regularly introduced progressive graphic concepts to the Disney crew. The problem, as John Hubley explained, was that "the marvelous training developed your imagination and ideas, which were then inhibited by the need to conform to a standardized style." The bubble burst in the early 1940s, when

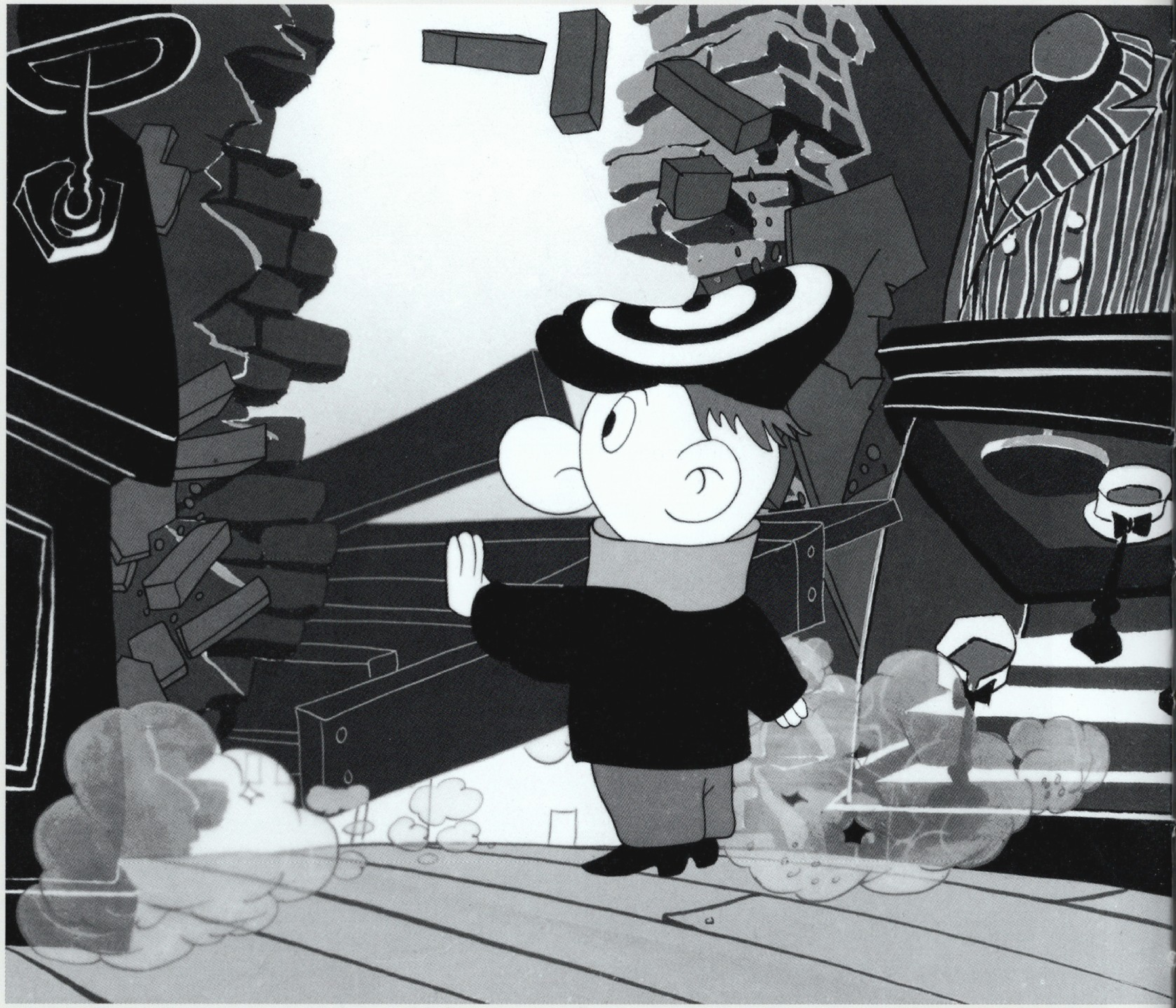


The Disney studio strike of 1941 was a seminal moment in the history of animation design, representing a symbolic parting of the industry's traditional and modern artists. One of the strike organizers, Art Babbitt (above, center), later worked as a director and animator at UPA and Storyboard, before launching Quartet Films in 1956.

there was a mass exodus of the studio's most graphically oriented artists. Most, though not all, left during the bitter Disney studio strike of 1941, which was sparked by a number of long-festering issues, including the studio's arbitrary salary structure, unfair bonus system, and lack of screen credits on short films. Among the strikers were Zach Schwartz, David Hilberman, and Stephen Bosustow; together they would found UPA in 1943. Other artists who left in the early 1940s include Bill Hurtz, John Hubley, Maurice Noble, Ted Parmelee, Jules Engel, Bill Melendez, Lew Keller, Ed Levitt, Art Heinemann, Les Novros, and John Ployardt McLeish. Some graphically inclined artists who left Disney during this period had given up animation entirely by the mid-1940s: Hank Ketcham and Walt Kelly went on to create the famous newspaper comics *Dennis the Menace* and *Pogo*, respectively; Vip Partch and Sam Cobean became top-flight magazine cartoonists; and Aurelius Battaglia, Van Kaufman, Martin Provensen, Jack Miller, and Campbell Grant all found success as illustrators (Battaglia notably returned to animation at UPA during the mid-1950s).

COLUMBIA'S SCREEN GEMS. The individual who perhaps benefited most from the Disney strike was former Warner Bros. director and Disney writer Frank Tashlin, who in October 1941 was promoted to the post of "production supervisor" at Columbia's moribund Screen Gems studio. The studio at the time was among the most downtrodden of all the Hollywood cartoon factories. They had no cartoon stars, having stopped production on their two character-driven series—Scrappy and Krazy Kat—and had resigned themselves to producing run-of-the-mill musical cartoons under the banners of Color Rhapsodies, Fables, and Phantasies. Tashlin, sensing the unique opportunity to push the studio in an entirely new direction, immediately started hiring as many former strikers as he could and assembled a crew of progressive artists that included Zach Schwartz, David Hilberman, Ted Parmelee, John Hubley, John Ployardt McLeish, Tony Rivera, Dun Roman, Bill Shull, and Sam Cobean.

Tashlin encouraged experimentation with both style and content and created an atmosphere where the young artists could put their graphic theories into practice. The inexperience of the artists, however, resulted in wildly uneven and awkward results. But among these curiosities are a handful of notable achievements, such as the beautifully stylized color backgrounds of *Way Down Yonder in the Corn* (1943) and the adventurous production design of Zach Schwartz for *Willoughby's Magic Hat* (1943). John Hubley,



This 1943 Columbia short, *Willoughby's Magic Hat*, was directed by Bob Wickersham and designed by Zach Schwartz.

who began directing for the first time at Columbia, codirected a handful of films with Paul Sommer that attempted to blend human characters, satiric humor, and modern design, a hitherto unexplored combination in the world of animated short subjects. But the results, like *The Vitamin G-Man* and *Professor Small and Mr. Tall* (both 1943), are visually lackluster and, from an entertainment perspective, nearly unwatchable. Tashlin left the studio in spring 1942 following a falling-out with Columbia brass, and most of his young recruits exited the studio within the year. In the end, Tashlin's great experiment with modern animation design was perhaps more impressive for what it attempted than for what it actually achieved.

Warner Bros. In the early 1940s, a lone individual at Leon Schlesinger Productions (the studio that produced the Warner Bros. shorts) began to push graphic boundaries. Layout artist John McGrew (1911–1999), working under the director Chuck Jones, pursued an ambitious graphic course that included designing dramatic background layouts, using creative color styling, and employing highly evolved film techniques. McGrew had studied psychology at the University of California–Los Angeles (UCLA) before attending Chouinard Art Institute in the mid-1930s to study motion-picture set design. Unable to find work in his chosen field, he "drifted into Schlesinger's more or less by accident."

The fact that a layout man would be assigned to an individual director at Schlesinger's was a novel idea in itself and signified the increasing awareness in the industry about the importance of background styling. Jones explained the way backgrounds were painted on the Warner cartoons prior to his partnering with McGrew:

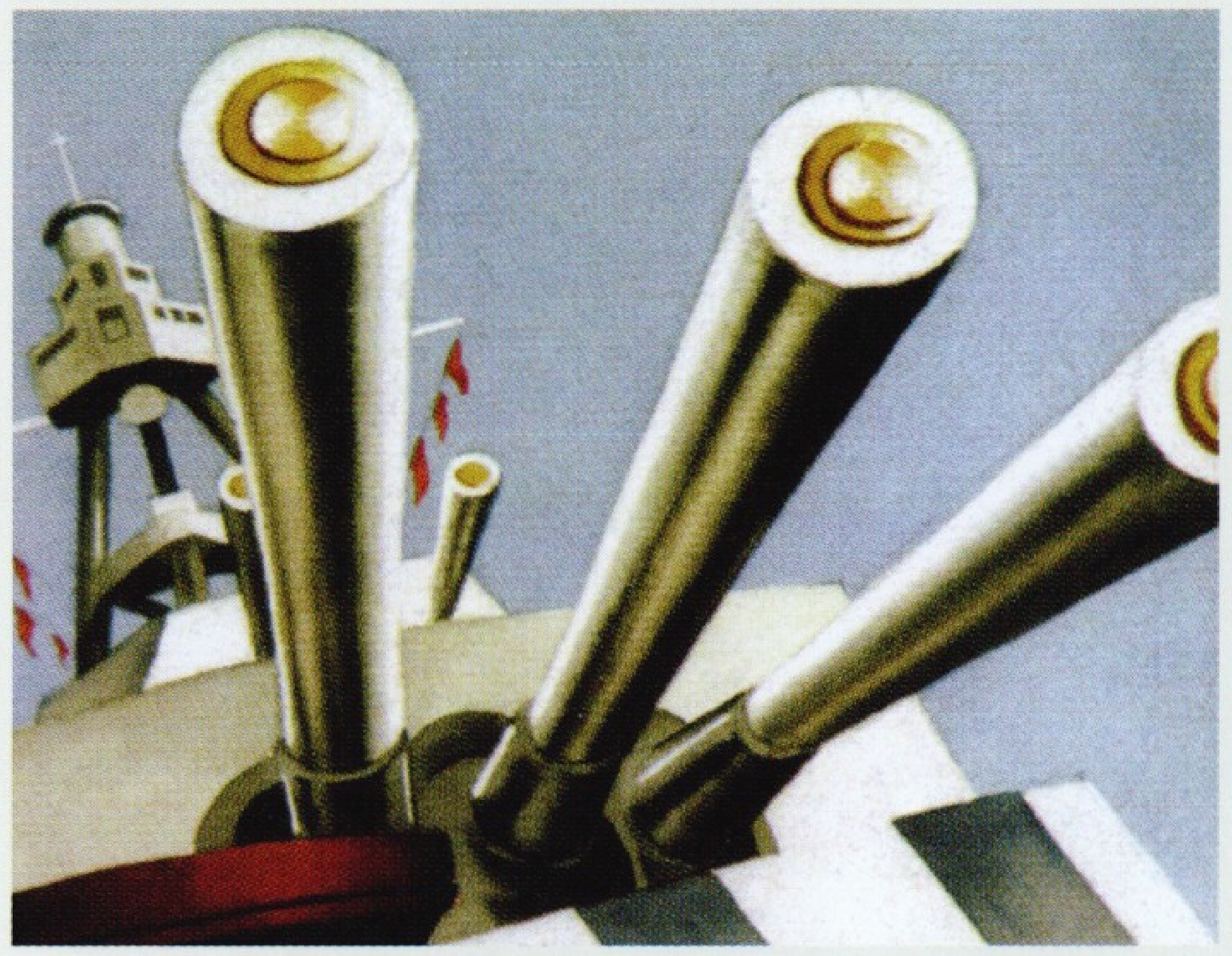
> *We had a background department at that time, rather than a background man working with each unit. They painted everybody's backgrounds, and so all the pictures' backgrounds tended to look alike. They were all pretty bad; their basic color was something we used to call "diaper-brindle."*

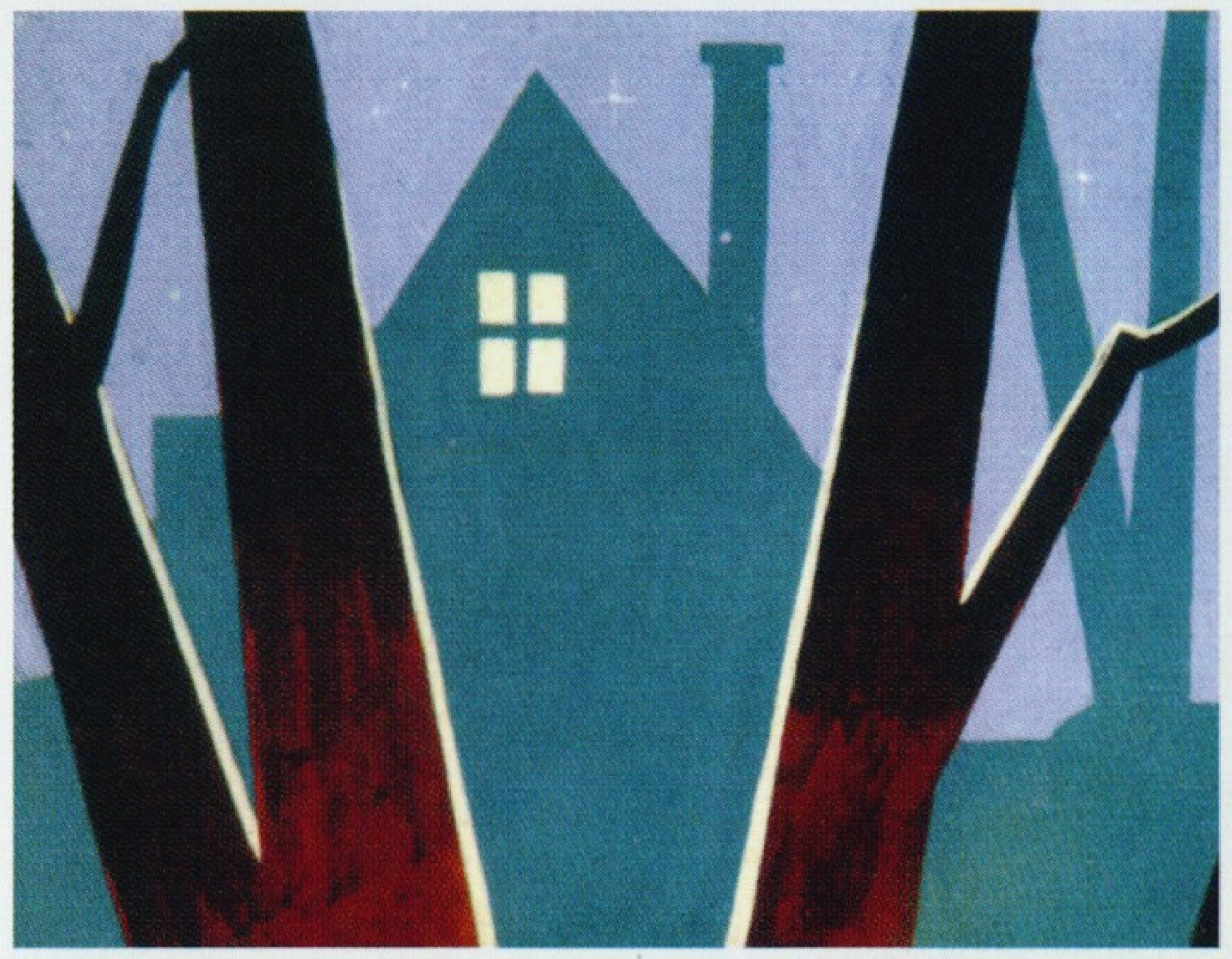
When McGrew first joined the Schlesinger studio in 1938, he was part of the background department to which Jones refers. "All the backgrounds of all the directors went to this department to be ruined," McGrew said in retrospect. But when McGrew became Jones's personal layout man, Jones encouraged him to experiment. And experiment McGrew did, proceeding to modernize the look of the Warner Bros. shorts beyond everybody's wildest imagination. McGrew's first step was to recruit background painters with a modern bent who could translate his layout designs with imaginative painting techniques. He settled on painter Paul Julian, and later replaced him with former Disney artist-instructor Eugene Fleury.

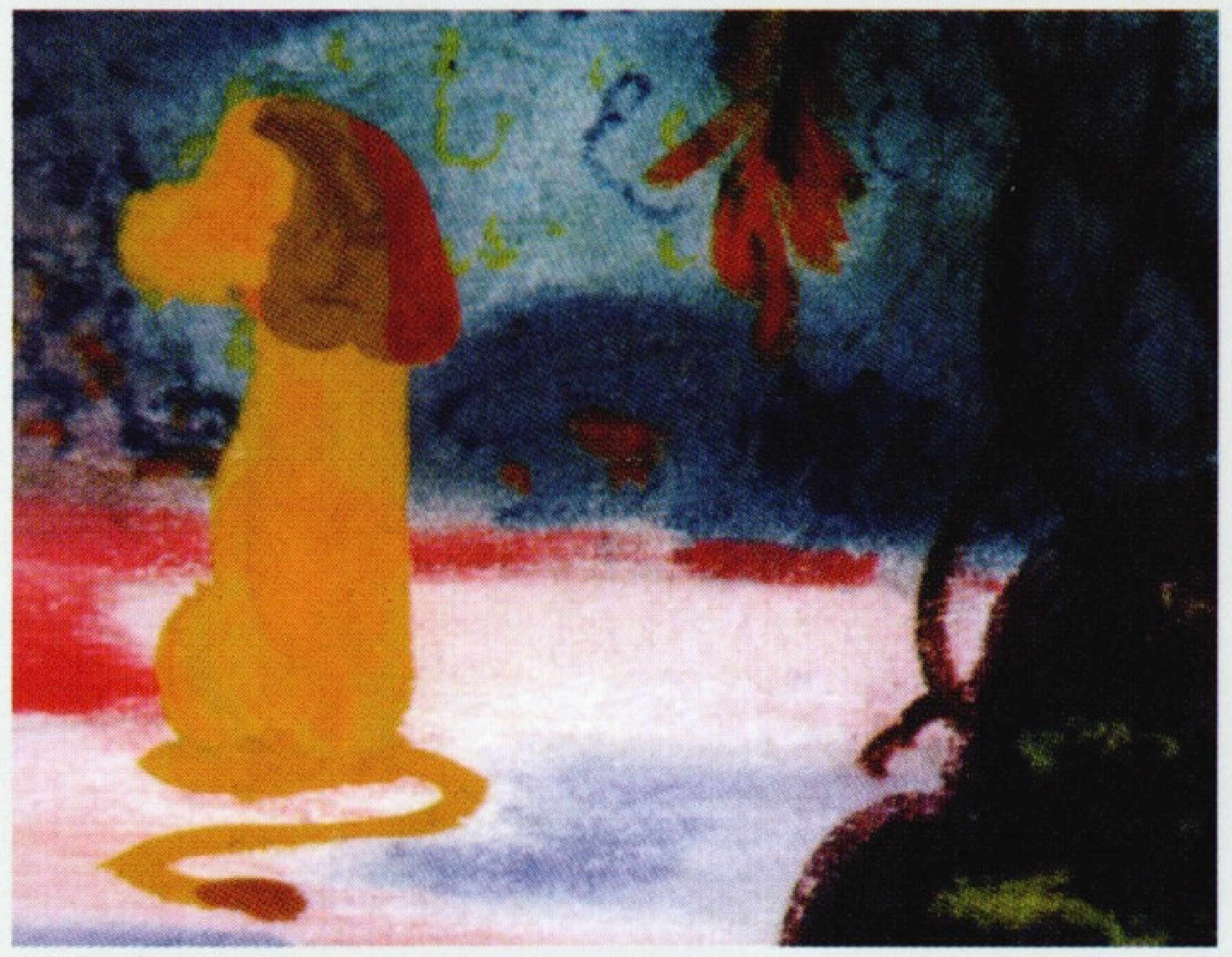
McGrew's visual innovations in Jones's early 1940s shorts are innumerable. *Conrad the Sailor* (1942) borrowed its dynamic staging directly from Sergei Eisenstein's classic silent film *Battleship Potemkin*. The film also marked Jones's first use of the cinematic device of match cuts:

> *We used a lot of overlapping graphics on that particular cartoon, so that one scene would have the same graphic shape as an earlier scene, even though it would be a different object: first we'd show a gun pointing up in the air, then in the next shot, there'd be a cloud in exactly the same shape.*

The idea was likely initiated by McGrew, who was "a great student of film techniques," according to Jones. The backgrounds in *Hold the Lion, Please* (1942) employ decorative Fauvist elements with their vivid unnatural color palettes and flat compositions. *The Aristo-Cat* (1943) is a remarkable film that takes place in a house with a constantly changing assortment of geometric wallpaper patterns and floor tiles, extending even to the imaginative patterning of colored books on a bookshelf. Even more novel, the film's background layout and color styling







Color styling sketches by John McGrew for (top to bottom) *Conrad the Sailor* (1942), *The Unbearable Bear* (1943), and *Hold the Lion, Please* (1942).

help to suggest the character's mood; when the film's main character, a pampered pussycat, frantically runs around house, the wallpaper patterns change to slashing red-and-white angles. "[McGrew] was deeply interested in the emotional effects you could get from those jagged red-and-white lines in the wallpaper. It's quite jarring," said Jones. In another shot of the fearful cat, there is dramatic staging in which the character is framed in a graphic triangle created by the background element (a bookshelf) and an abstract flat-colored foreground shape. Fleury's background painting technique on this film was also innovative: he used opaque cel paints as background paints instead of the conventional watercolor. By the 1950s, using cel paints for backgrounds was common practice throughout the industry, but Fleury was one of the first to experiment with this idea in the early 1940s.

The only awkwardness in these films results from Jones's traditional, centerline-school character designs in the foreground, which seem ill-matched to McGrew's backgrounds. The issue was resolved in *The Dover Boys at Pimento University* (1942), a parody of turn-of-the-century melodramas. For the first time, McGrew's spare background styling was matched by director Jones, who provided human characters that were stylized in both appearance and movement (Bobe Cannon, who became a major creative force at UPA during the 1950s, was responsible for much of the film's inventive animation).

Other Jones-McGrew collaborations in 1942 and 1943 include *The Unbearable Bear, Flop Goes the Weasel, My Favorite Duck,* and *Super Rabbit*. McGrew credits Jones for providing him the support and encouragement to work in a modern idiom, but studio boss Leon Schlesinger threatened to fire McGrew on three separate occasions and once to fire Jones as a direct result of their graphic experiments. McGrew joined the U.S. Navy in 1942, and following his discharge, he moved to France, where he pursued other interests, including music and painting. Though McGrew's animation career was short-lived, he created an influential body of work that introduced modern design into the world of animation backgrounds.

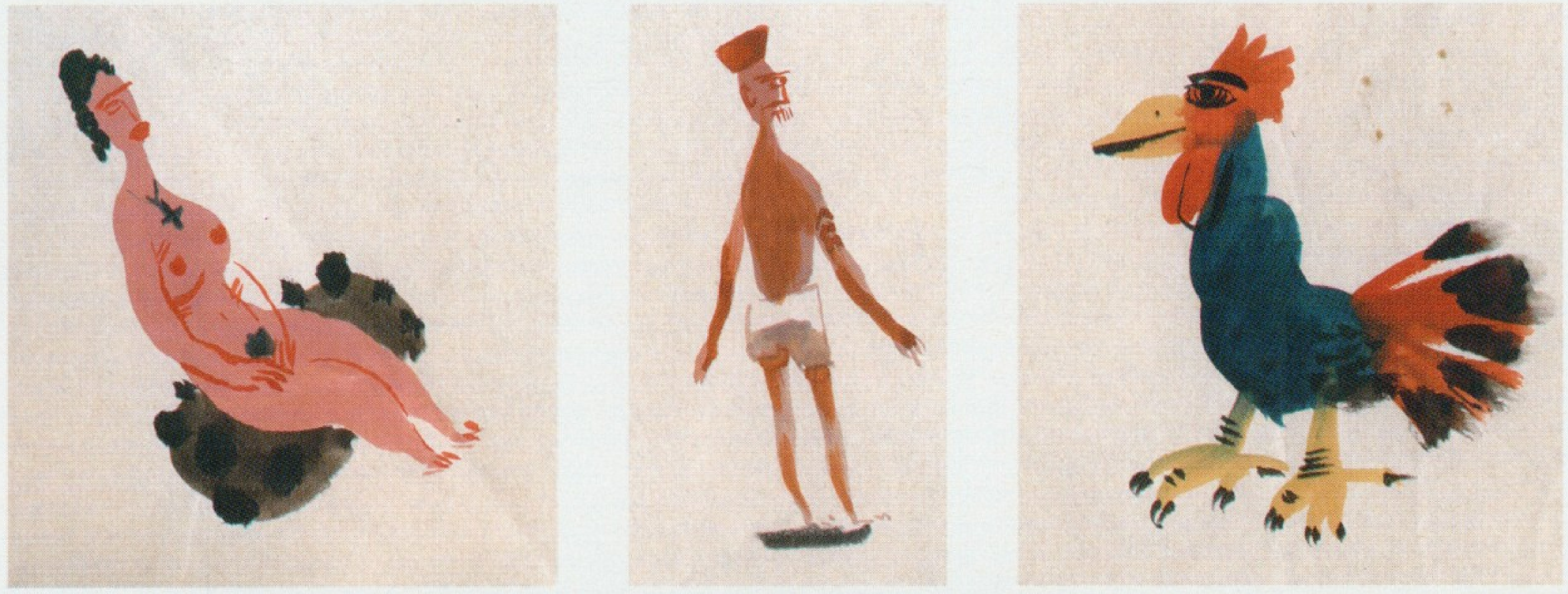
First Motion Picture Unit. The unlikeliest setting for modern animation design in the early 1940s was the Army Air Force's First Motion Picture Unit (FMPU). The FMPU was organized in 1942 to produce training and instructional films for the armed forces. It was based in the Los Angeles suburb of Culver City, and dozens of animators were enlisted from the local animation studios. Among the FMPU staff were many artists who would go on to work at UPA, including director-designers John Hubley and Bill Hurtz; background painters Jules Engel, Herb Klynn, and Bob McIntosh; animators Willis Pyle, Jack Schnerk, and Rudy Larriva; and writer Bill Scott.

The military displayed little concern about the aesthetic qualities of the training films; as long as the films conveyed the correct information, the artists could employ any style of drawing they desired. Unfortunately, it is impossible to judge exactly how far the artists pushed the graphic content in these training films because the majority of the FMPU films were destroyed after World War II. One thing is certain though: the instructional subject matter of the films differed radically from anything that had been produced before by Hollywood animators. Suddenly, artists were being asked to create animated films whose primary purpose was to educate instead of entertain and whose subject matter dealt more with nuts and bolts than fuzzy animal characters. This broadened scope of subject matter is a key element that carried over into 1950s animation when artists began using the medium to not only create entertainment films, but to also help sell products, educate audiences about political and business ideas, and express personal views in their films.

While serving in the FMPU, some of the artists, including Bill Hurtz and Willis Pyle, discovered a new book called *The Language of Vision* (1944), by former Bauhaus instructor Gyorgy Kepes. The book broke down modern art into its most elemental components—shapes, lines, planes, and colors—and used plentiful visual examples by graphic designers like Paul Rand and Ladislav Sutnar, French poster designer A. M. Cassandre, and painters like Picasso, Klee, and Miró. Hurtz recalls that the book was "incredible as far as the pictures it had in it, and with the background we had, it was very easy to assimilate."

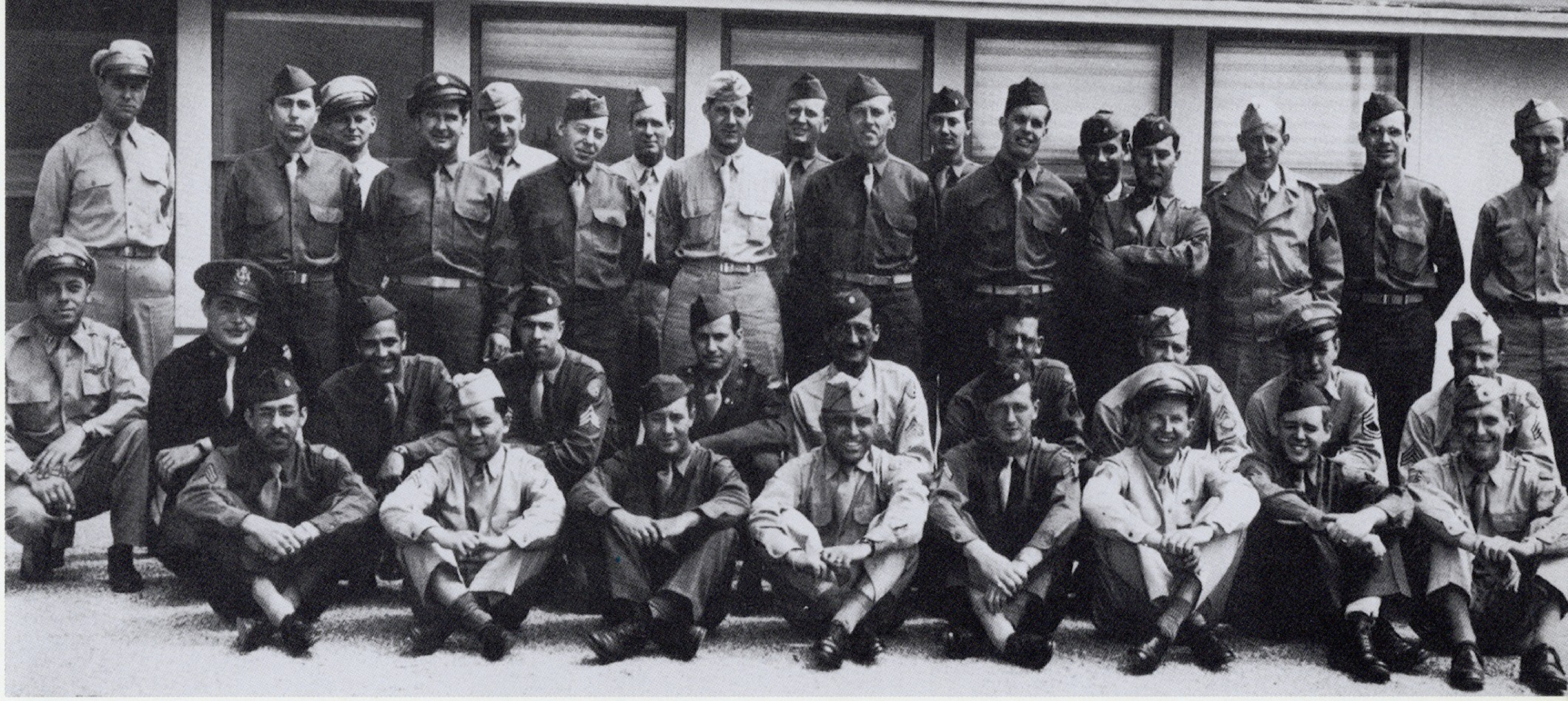
Mid- to Late-1940s

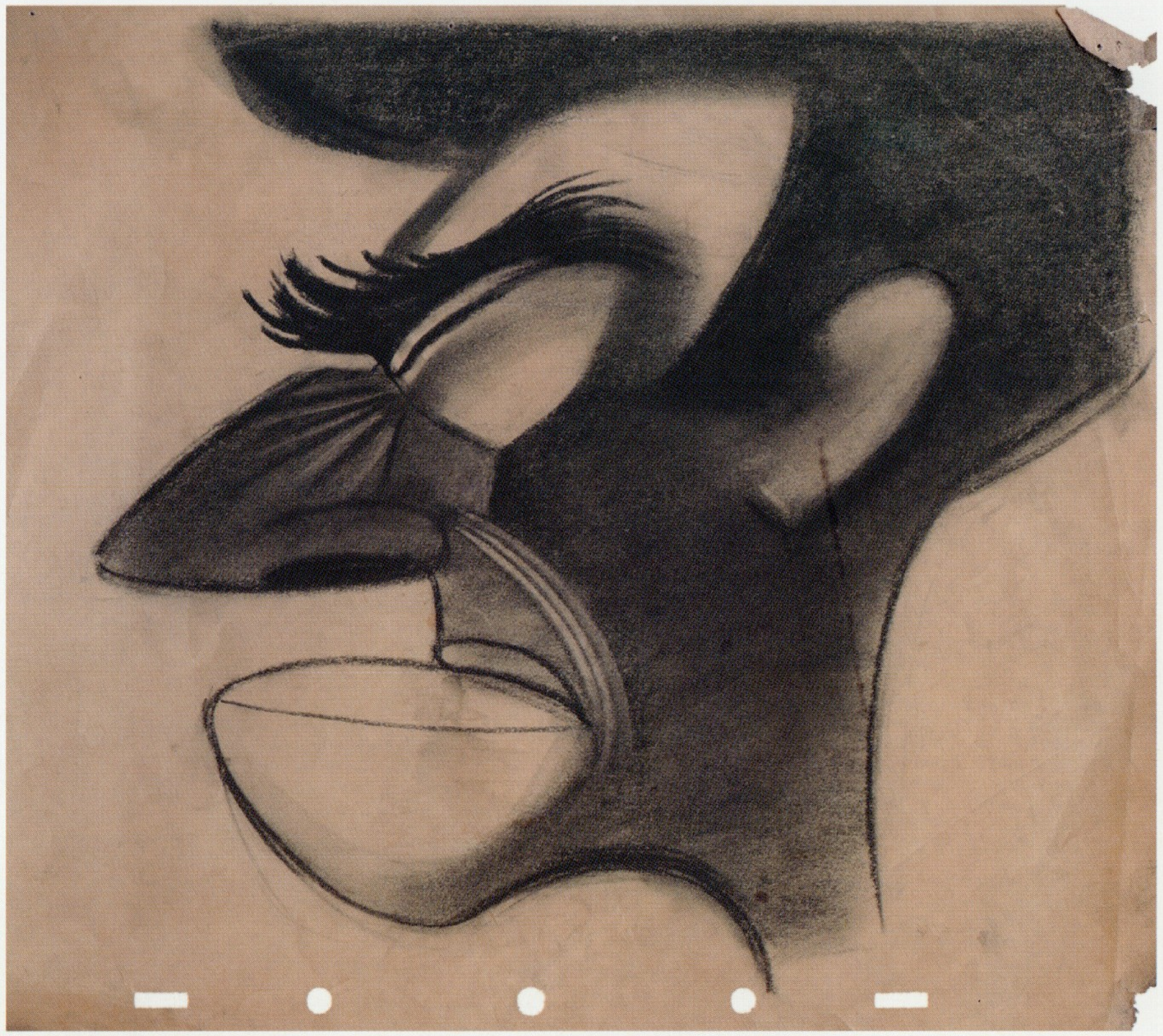
As the 1940s progressed, a whole new field of commercial animation took hold of the industry, and studios opened up dedicated solely to producing industrial films and commercials for television and theaters. Many of the artists who would make an impact during the 1950s opted to work at these smaller commercial houses during the 1940s. These mom-and-pop animation establishments often employed a dozen or fewer full-time employees, creating an atmosphere with less creative compartmentalization and increased graphic freedom. Among the artists who worked at such studios were Ed Benedict and Bob McIntosh at Cartoon Films Ltd., Ed Levitt and Earl Klein at Raphael G. Wolff Studios, Ted Parmelee and Abe Liss at Graphic Films,



These sketches by Van Kaufman show an awareness of modern art and styling among the First Motion Picture Unit (FMPU) artists.

The staff of the Army Air Force's First Motion Picture Unit (FMPU). Standing (left to right): Lee Hill, Gus Arriola, Gil Rugg, Ralph Chadwick, Norm McCabe, Sam Katz, Herb Rothwill, Bill Higgins, Jack Schnerk, Frank Onaitis, Jon Kleley, Russ Smiley, Dave Salcwas, Ed Becker, Willis Pyle, Frank Thomas, and Amby Paliwoda. Kneeling (left to right): Ray Fahringer, Rudy Ising, Dick Thompson, Osmond Evans, Bernie Wolf, Jules Engel, Ross Wetzel, John Hubley, Van Kaufman, and Ralph Tiller. Seated (left to right): Rudy Larriva, Monroe Leung, Manny Gonzales, Boots Marino, Ernie Arcella, unknown, Bill Hurtz, and Phil Monroe.





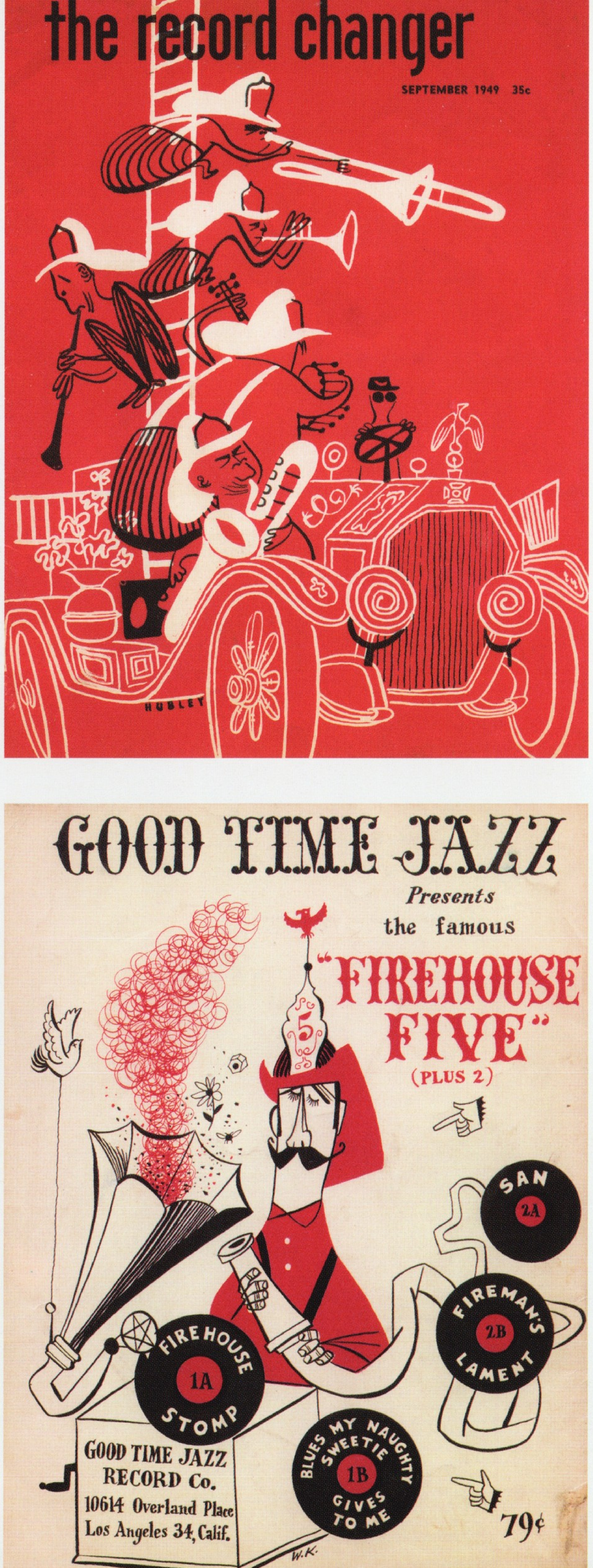
Far left: Joe Smith (left) and Bob McIntosh look over the shoulders of John Hubley, in this early 1940s photo from the First Motion Picture Unit.

Left: First Motion Picture Unit (FMPU)-era Bob McIntosh caricature by John Hubley.

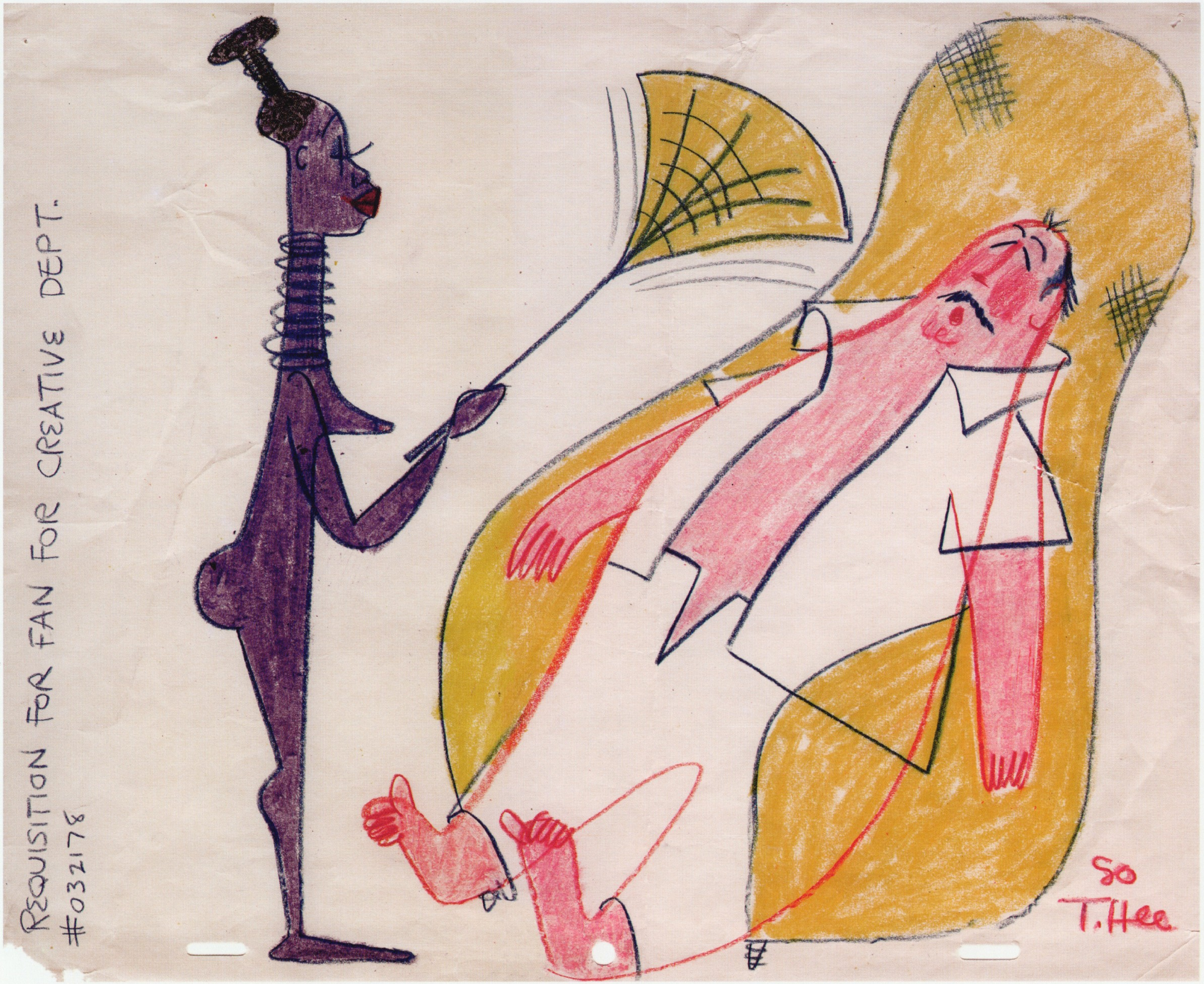
and Gene Deitch and Cliff Roberts at the Jam Handy Organization in Detroit. The most significant of the small studios started in the 1940s was United Productions of America (UPA), which by 1950 had supplanted the Disney studio as the arbiter of taste in animated filmmaking. Its history is discussed in depth later in this book.

Chouinard Art Institute—today, California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) in Valencia, California—produced more industry artists than any other school during animation's golden age. In the 1930s, the most influential instructor at the school had been Don Graham, whose teaching was rooted in deep spatial drawing and highly structured anatomy, but Chouinard students who entered the animation business during the late 1940s and 1950s typically cite two other teachers as their biggest influences: design teacher Bill Moore, who introduced his students to African sculpture and native art, and decorative illustration–advertising art teacher Harry Diamond, whose illustrations printed in magazines like *Westways* and *Holiday* could almost be mistaken for the work of an animation designer.

By 1950, the first generation of design-savvy animation artists, including John Hubley, Bill Hurtz, Bobe Cannon, Tom Oreb, Ward Kimball, and Ed Benedict, had been experimenting with designed animation for nearly an entire decade. They had not only fully absorbed the lessons of contemporary graphics and painting but had also become aware of the untapped visual possibilities inherent within the animated medium itself. No part of the filmmaking process was to be taken for granted anymore. Design would influence the way characters looked and moved as well as how they interacted with the colors and shapes in their surroundings. These trailblazing animation Modernists were joined by a younger group who were entering the industry in the late 1940s and early 1950s: artists such as Fred Crippen, Cliff Roberts, Ernie Pintoff, Bob Dranko, Walt Peregoy, Victor Haboush, and Sterling Sturtevant. This group could care less about the "Disney style"—they were the generation of Jackson Pollock and Ben Shahn, and they were eager to create cartoons with a cool and modern aesthetic. The collaboration between these artists resulted in the most stylish period in the history of the animated film. *Cartoon Modern* tells their story.



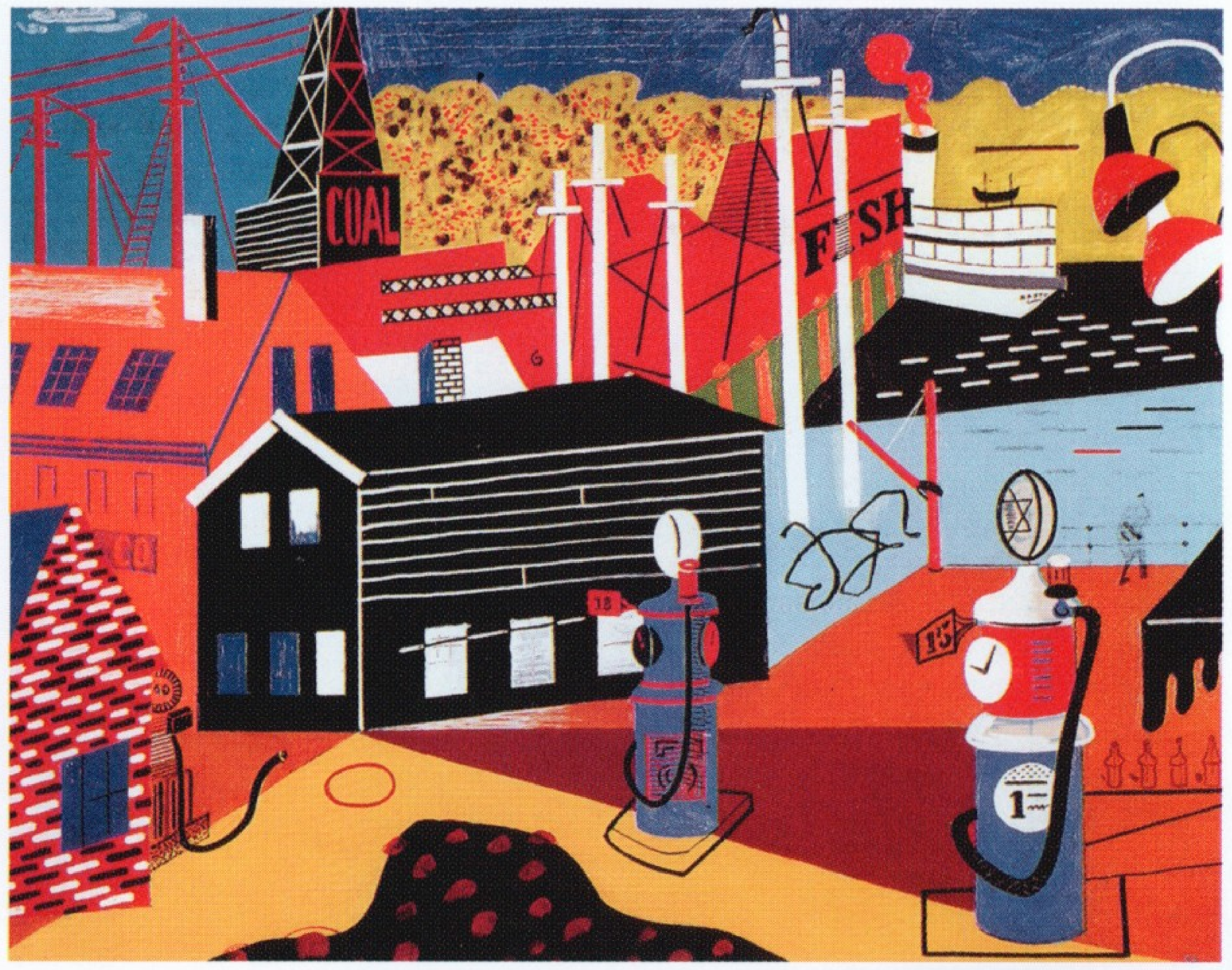
The front and back covers of this September 1949 issue of the *Record Changer* were drawn by animation director-designers John Hubley and Ward Kimball. By the end of the 1940s, artists like Hubley and Kimball were thoroughly immersed in the modern sensibility and prepared to change the look of animation forever.


REQUISITION FOR FAN FOR CREATIVE DEPT.
#032178
SO
T. Hee

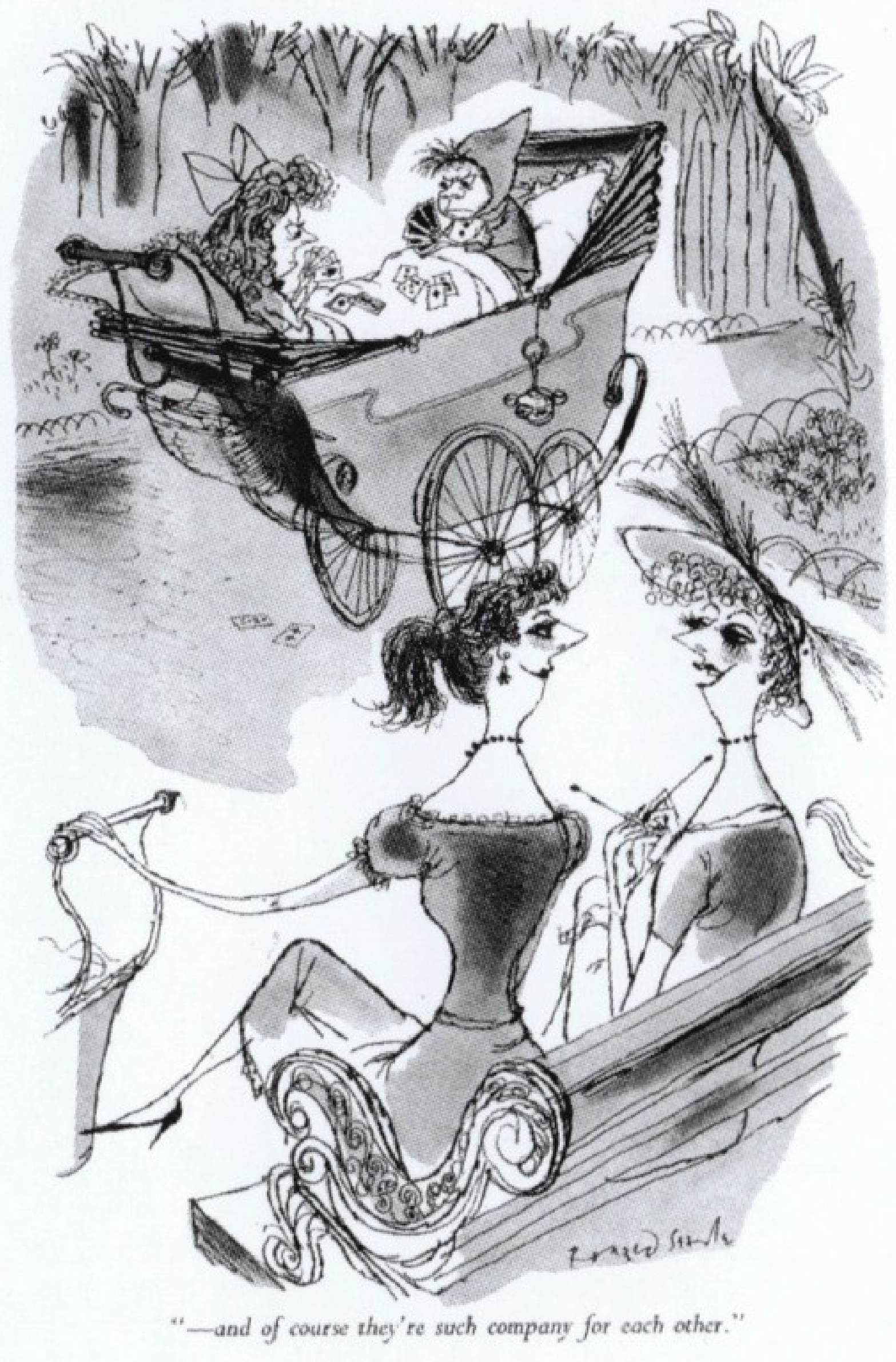
During the 1950s, despite the unfortunate racial stereotype, even studio gag drawings, such as this one by designer T. Hee, had a sophisticated sense of design.

INSPIRATION

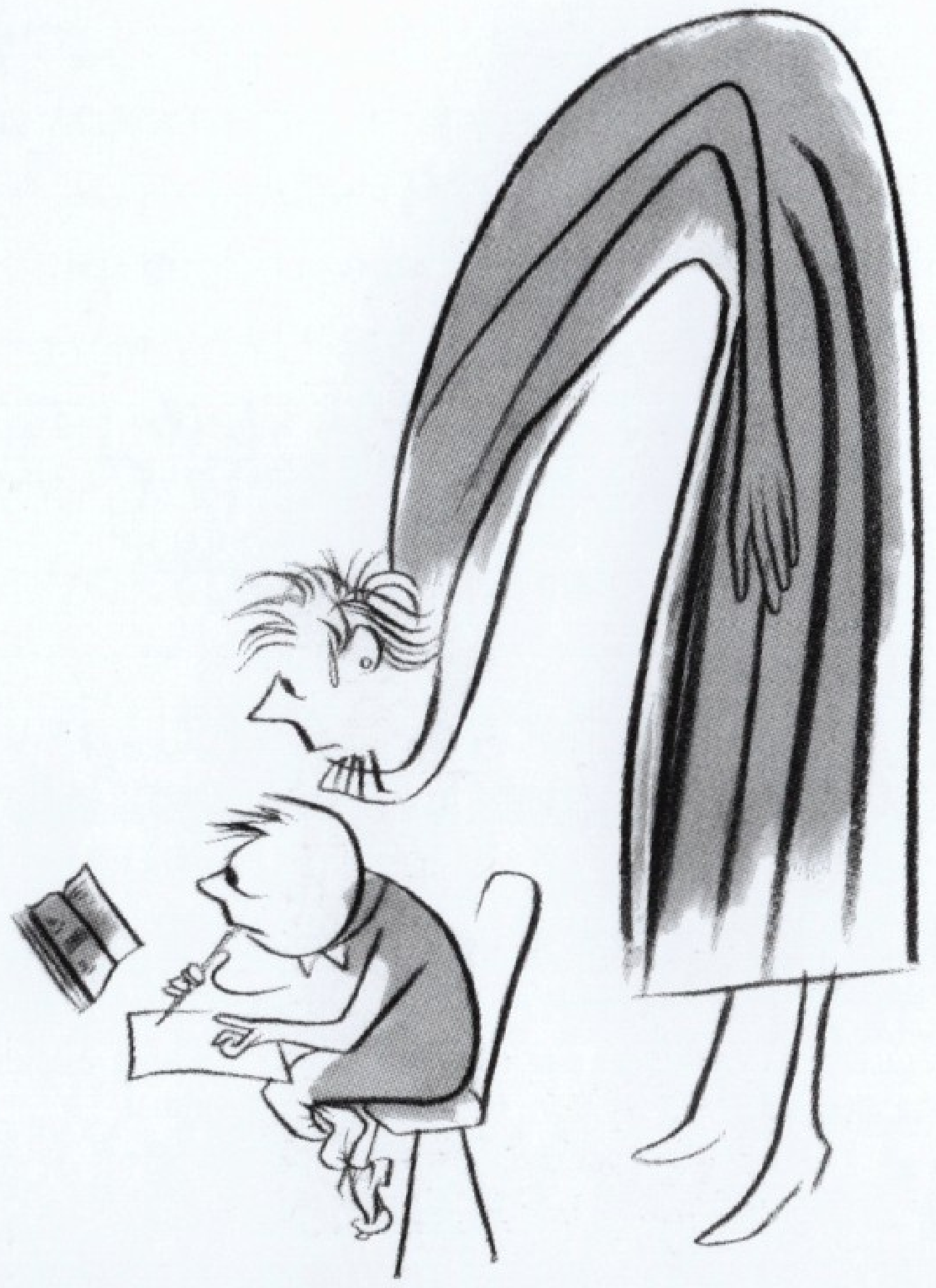
During the 1950s, animation artists drew inspiration from a wide range of modern art sources, including the fine arts, magazine cartoons, graphic design, and children's book illustration. Art by some of the modernists who influenced animation artists is shown on this spread.



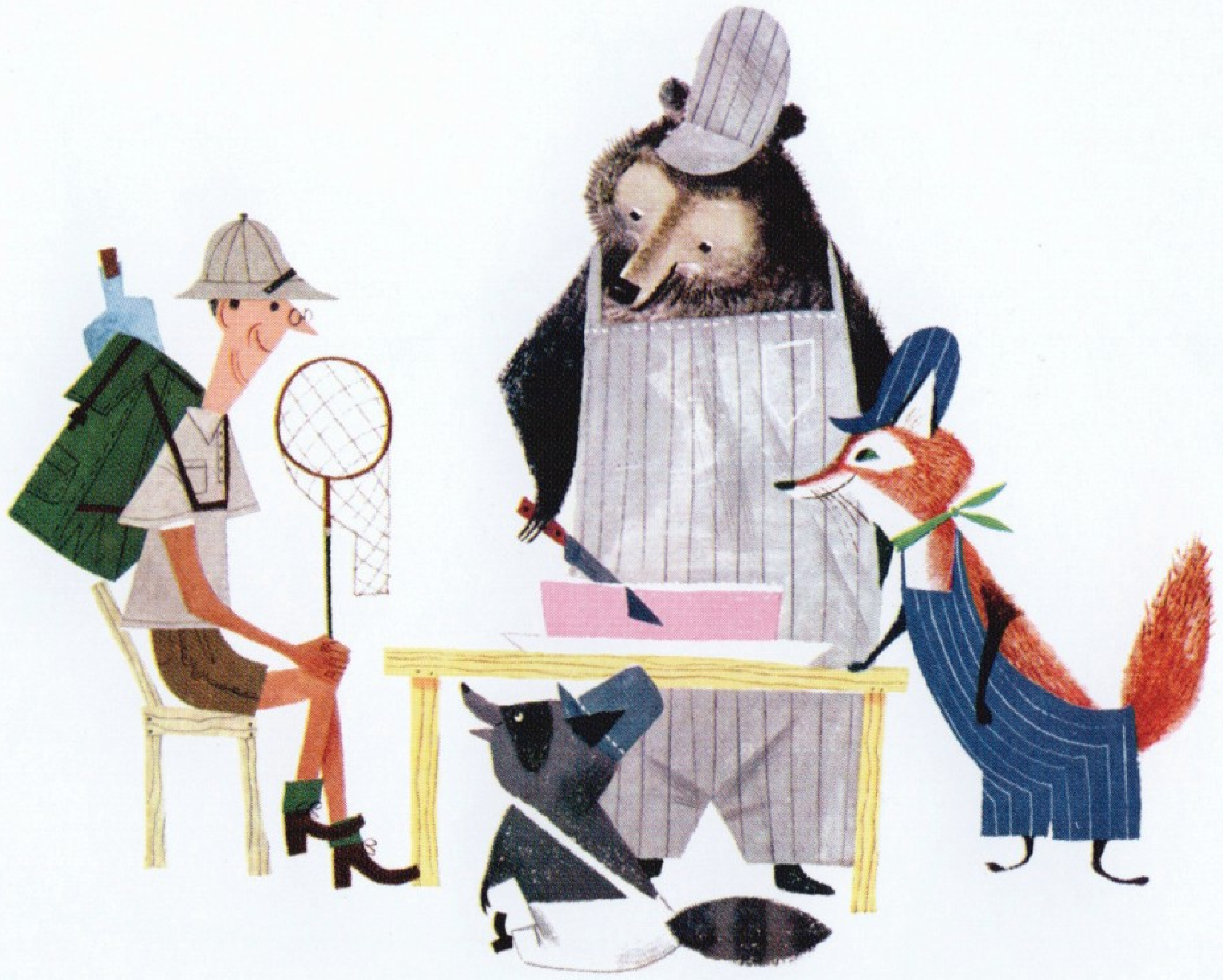
STUART DAVIS


"—and of course they're such company for each other."

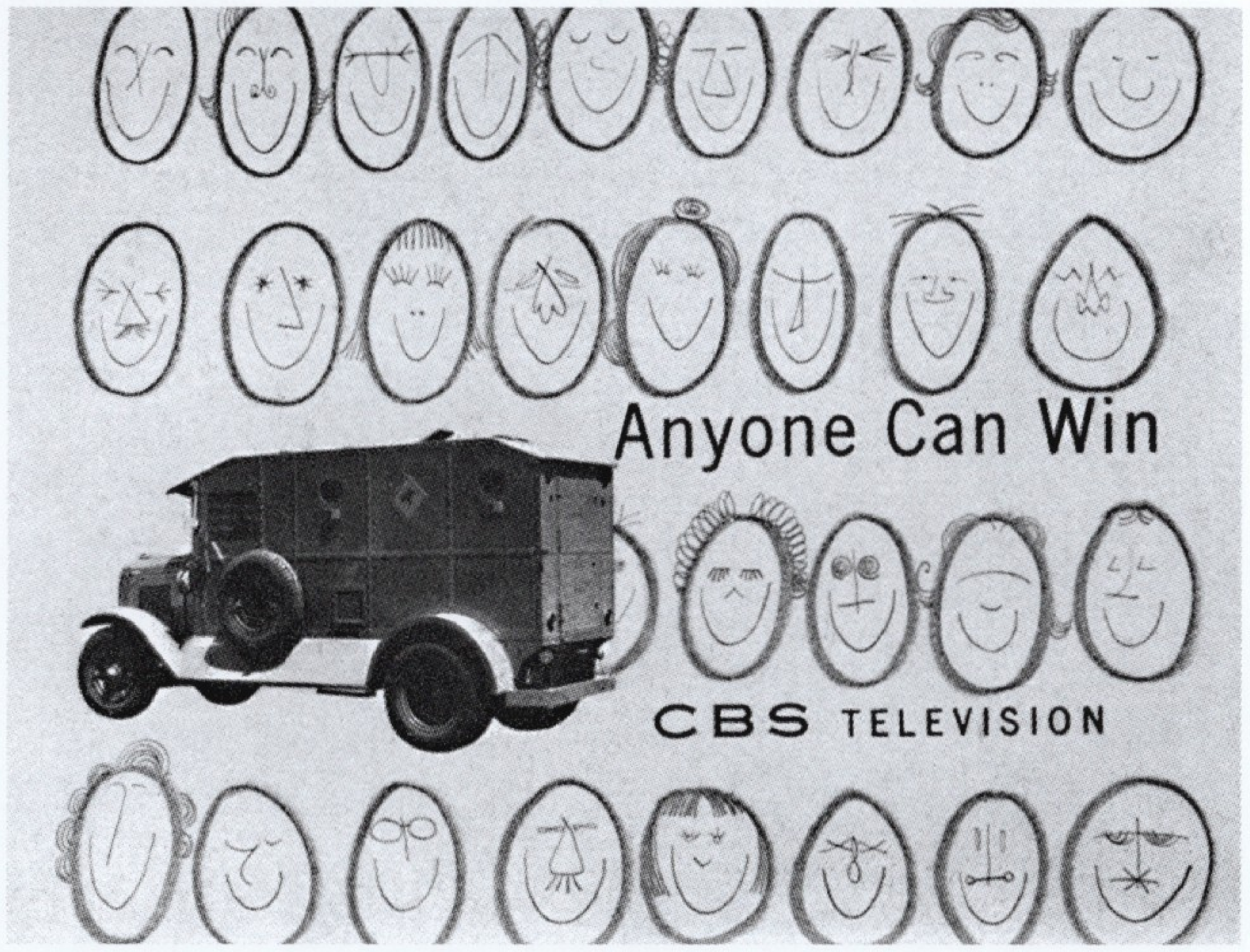
RONALD SEARLE



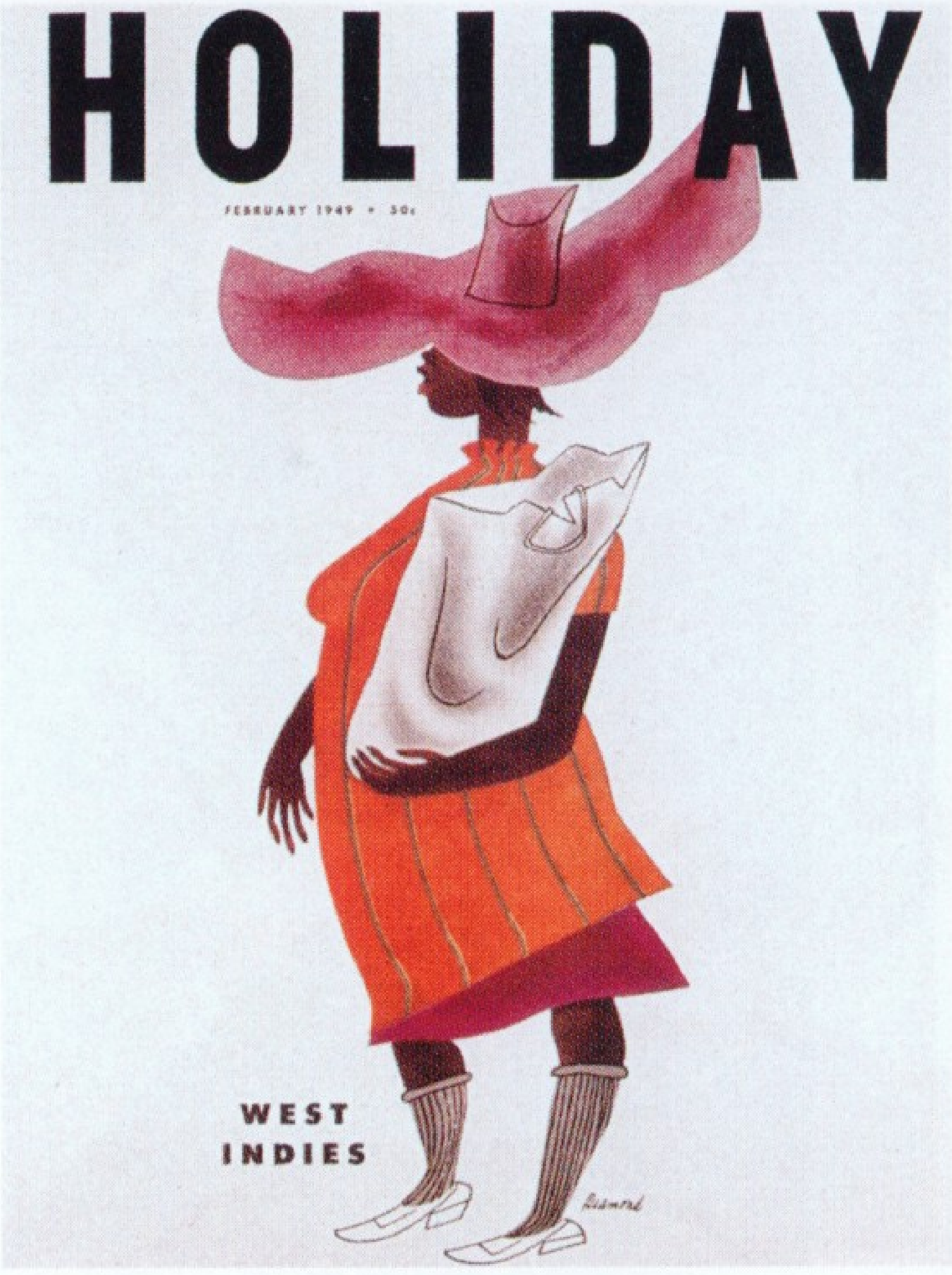
ROBERT OSBORN



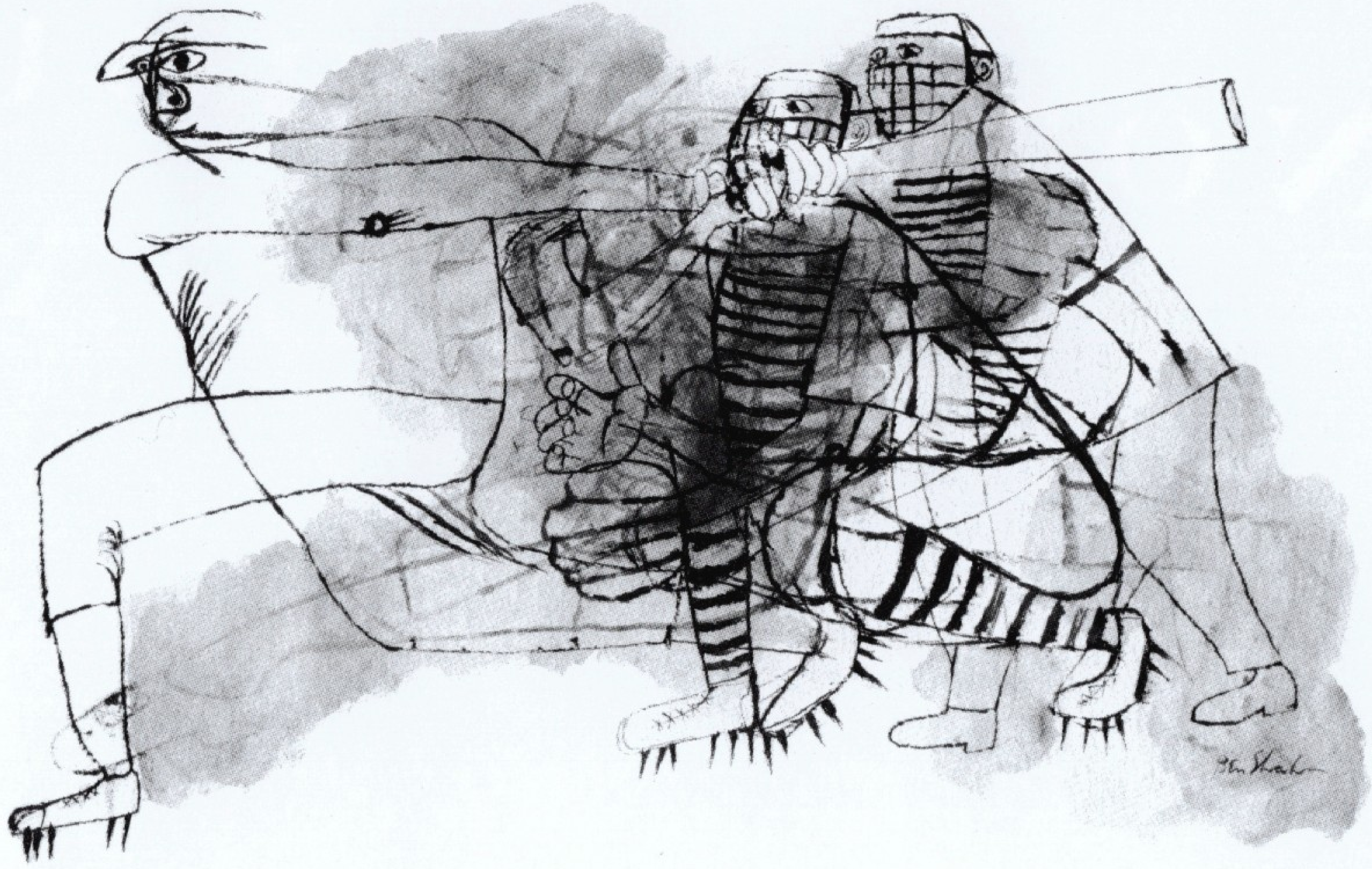
MARTIN AND ALICE PROVENSEN


Anyone Can Win
CBS TELEVISION

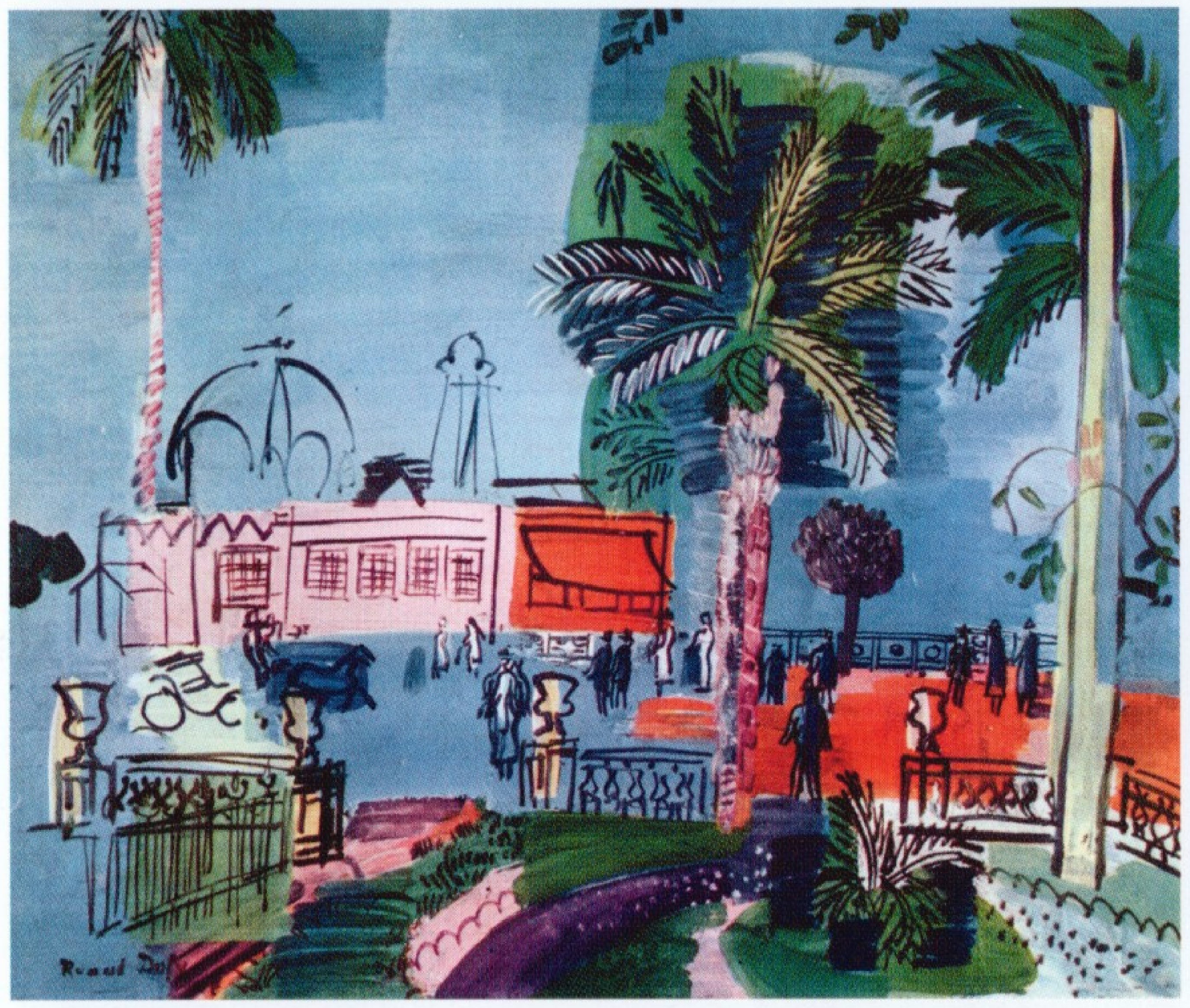
GEORG OLDEN


HOLIDAY
FEBRUARY 1949 • 30¢
WEST INDIES

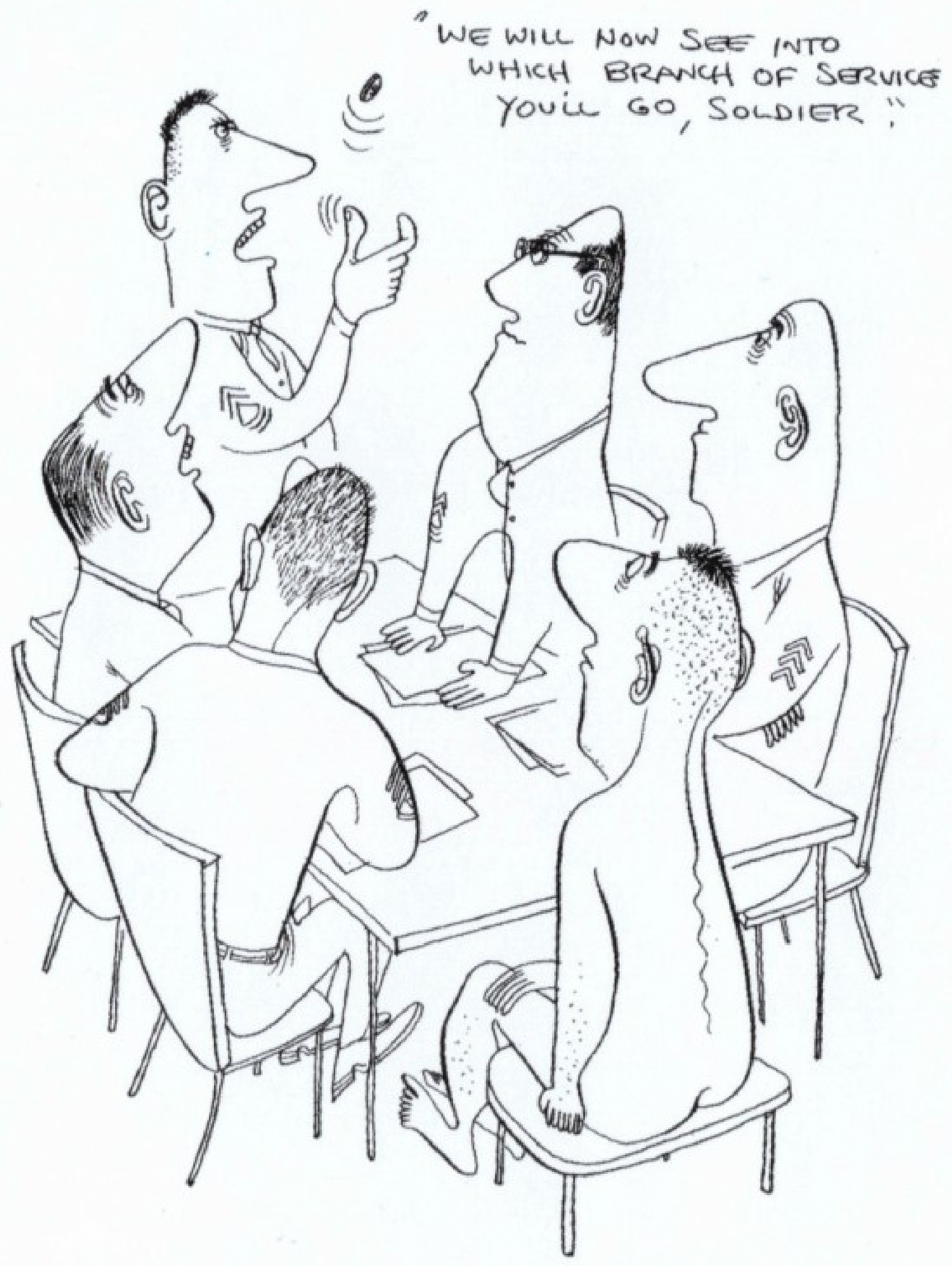
Harry Diamond



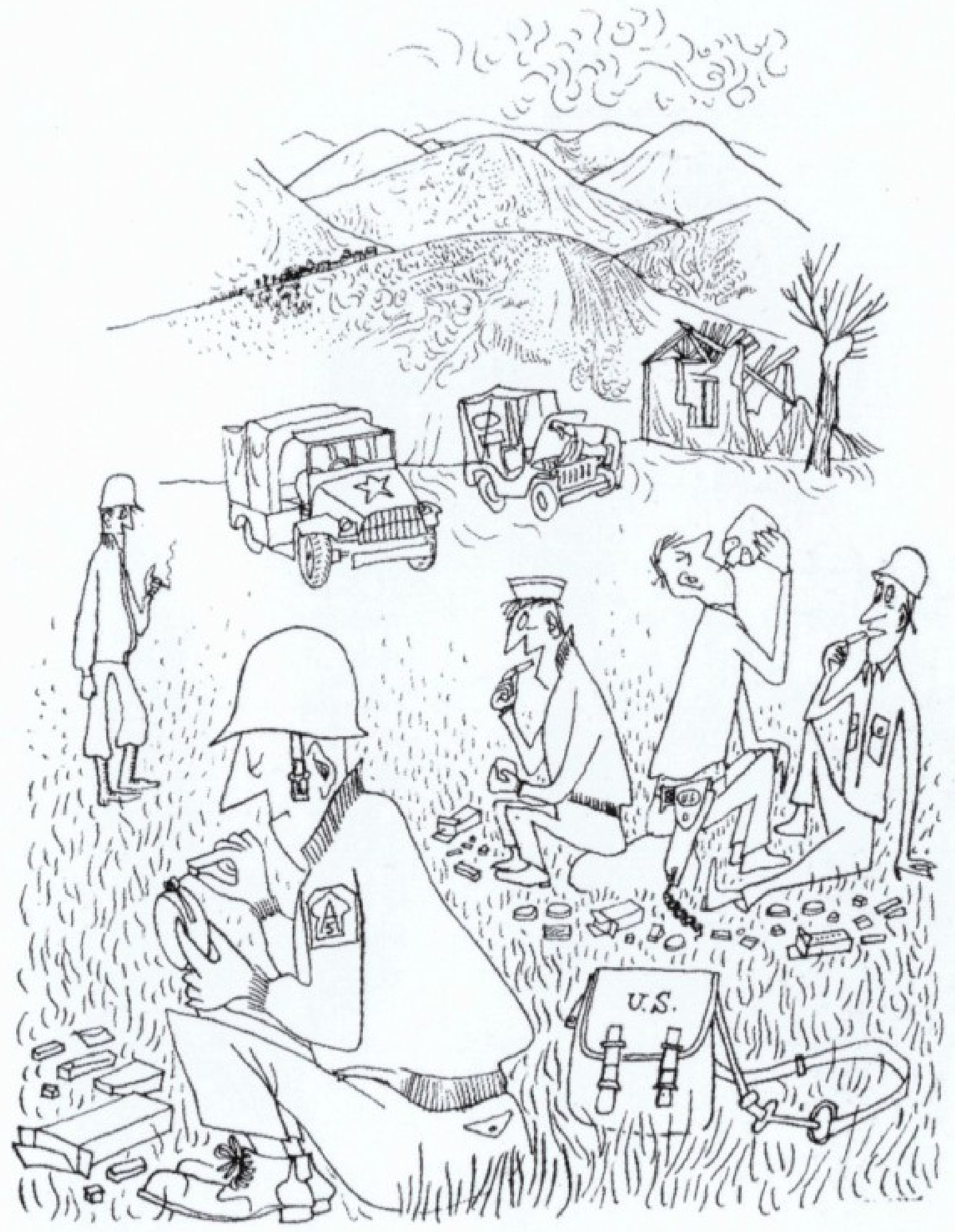
Ben Shahn



Raoul Dufy

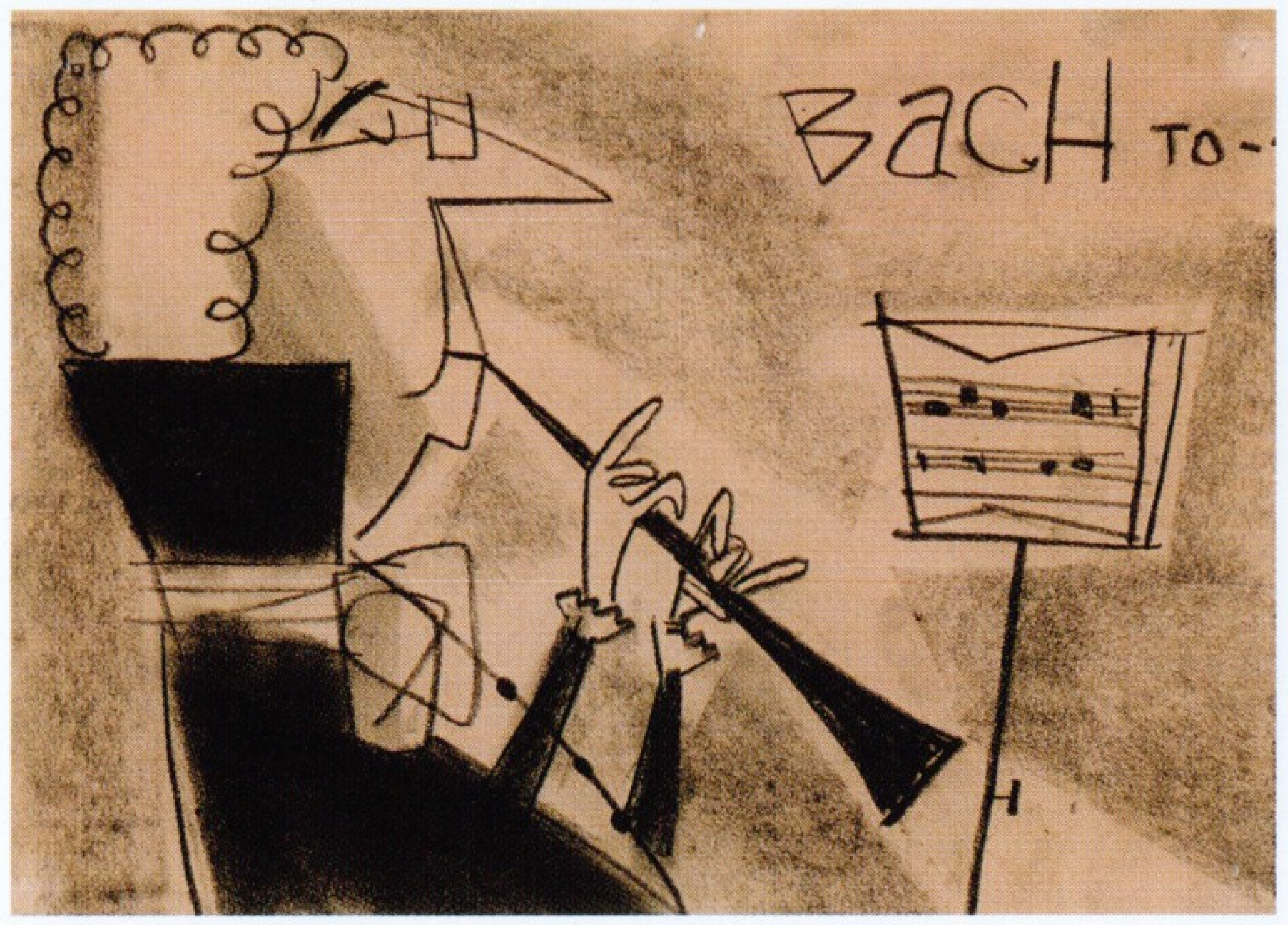

"WE WILL NOW SEE INTO WHICH BRANCH OF SERVICE YOU'LL GO, SOLDIER."

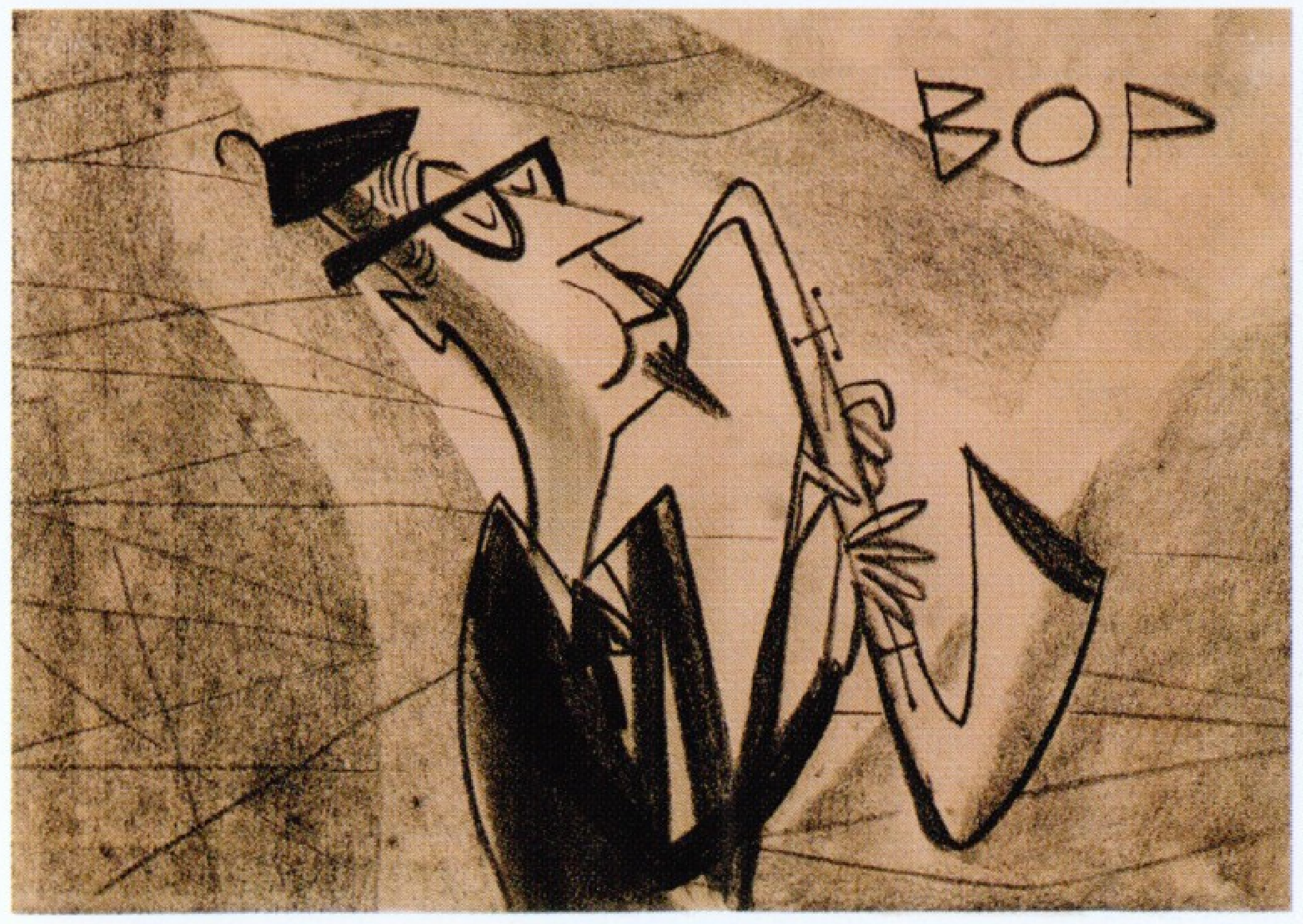
Virgil "Vip" Partch



Saul Steinberg

NOTES ABOUT THE ARTWORK





Writing about art has its value, to be sure, but no amount of written explanation can supplant the education that comes from actually viewing the artwork. The art printed on the following pages is crucial in telling the story of animation design in the 1950s. There is simply no other way to explain the breadth and scope of that era's animation styling. Each piece allows the reader to gain a deeper, richer understanding of the era's various designers and the nature of their groundbreaking artistry. The inclusion of numerous examples of work by different artists intends to give readers the opportunity to compare and contrast the work of these designers and to draw their own conclusions about the designers and films of the 1950s.

The artwork in this book is generally divided into two categories: preproduction artwork (the development art that inspires and guides a film's production) and production artwork (drawings and paintings that are seen in finished films). The preproduction art, never intended to reach the screen, often represents the purest and most individual graphic expression, before the artwork is adapted for the needs of group production. There is a vast array of preproduction and production art throughout this book: concept paintings and storyboards (comic book–type panels that explain the film's story); model sheets (character drawings that show the characters from various angles as an aid to animators); background pencil layouts, which lead to the background paintings; and animation drawings and cels (the drawings were transferred by inkers and painters to clear sheets of celluloid—inked on the front, painted on the back; these clear sheets were then placed on top of the backgrounds and photographed).

A note about captions: while animated shorts and longer films are identified by their directors, the difficulty of finding reliable director info for commercials has made it necessary to identify TV spots by designer. It is an ideal solution since in the world of TV commercials, designers often played an equal (if not more prominent) role as the director of the production.

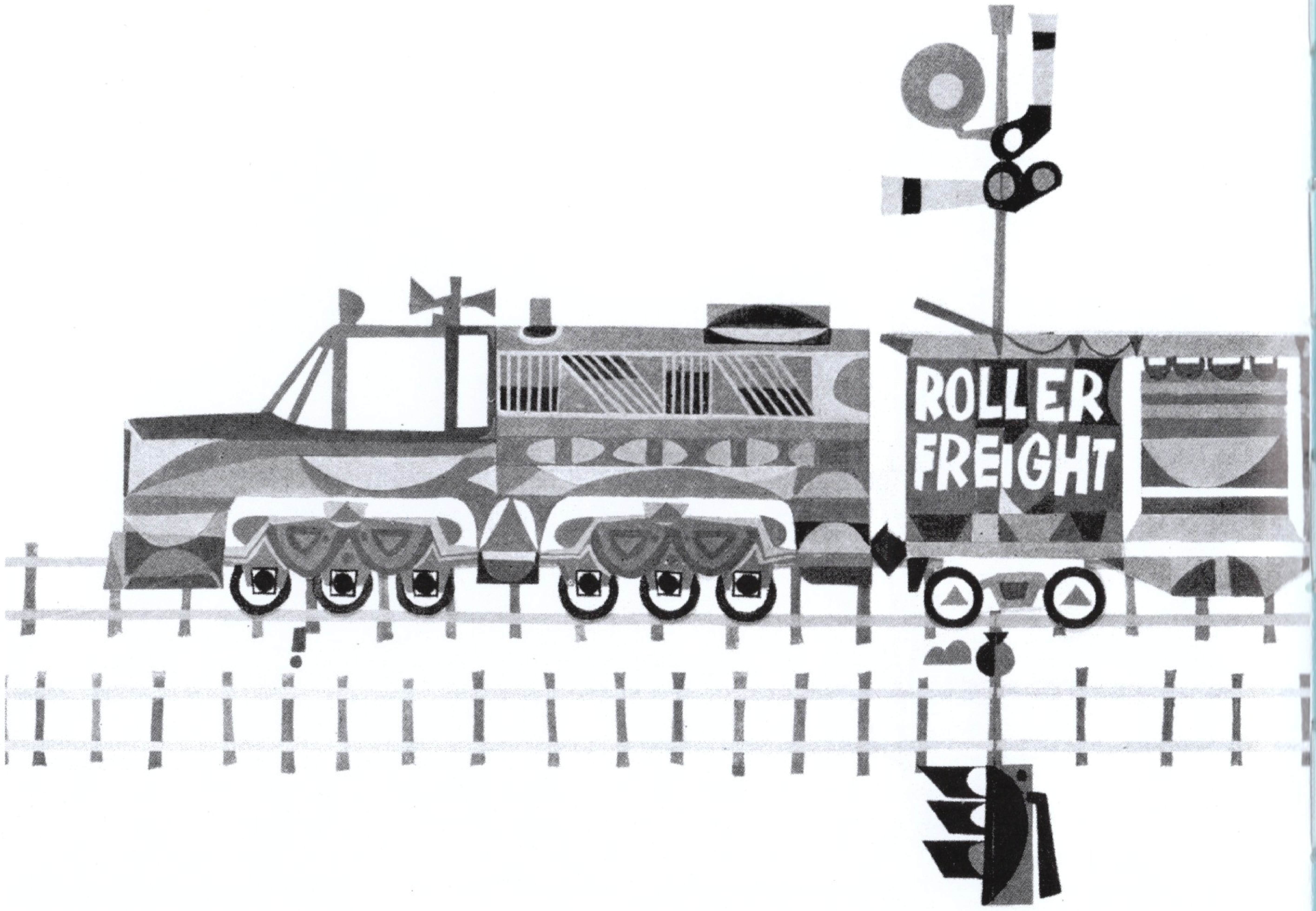
Finally, any survey of animated films must take into account that animation is a medium that takes place in both space and time. A book of static artwork is therefore an imperfect method of presenting design that is meant to be seen in movement; to appreciate the full visual impact of these designs, the films must be seen in their original form. (As the case may be, the majority of the films presented in this book are unavailable for viewing on either home video or DVD.) On the other hand, many pieces of art actually benefit from the printed page, allowing one to linger over and savor the details of a drawing or painting that may pass by all too quickly in a film. Removed from their filmic context, the pieces in this book still hold up as remarkably beautiful works of art.

***Toot Whistle Plunk and Boom* (1953)**
Directors: Ward Kimball and C. August Nichols
Opposite: Film still
This page: Storyboard drawings by Tom Oreb

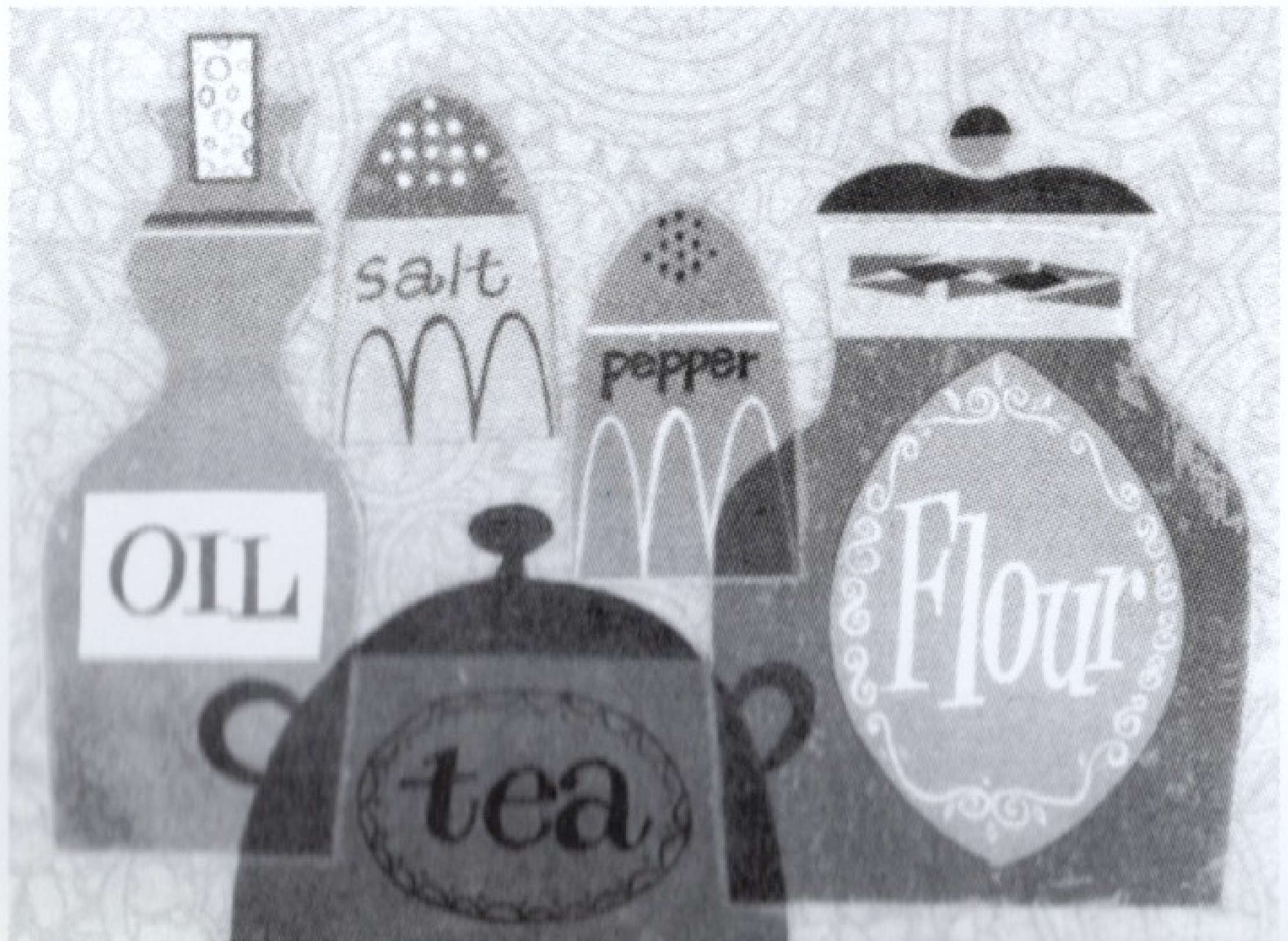
A

ACADEMY PICTURES

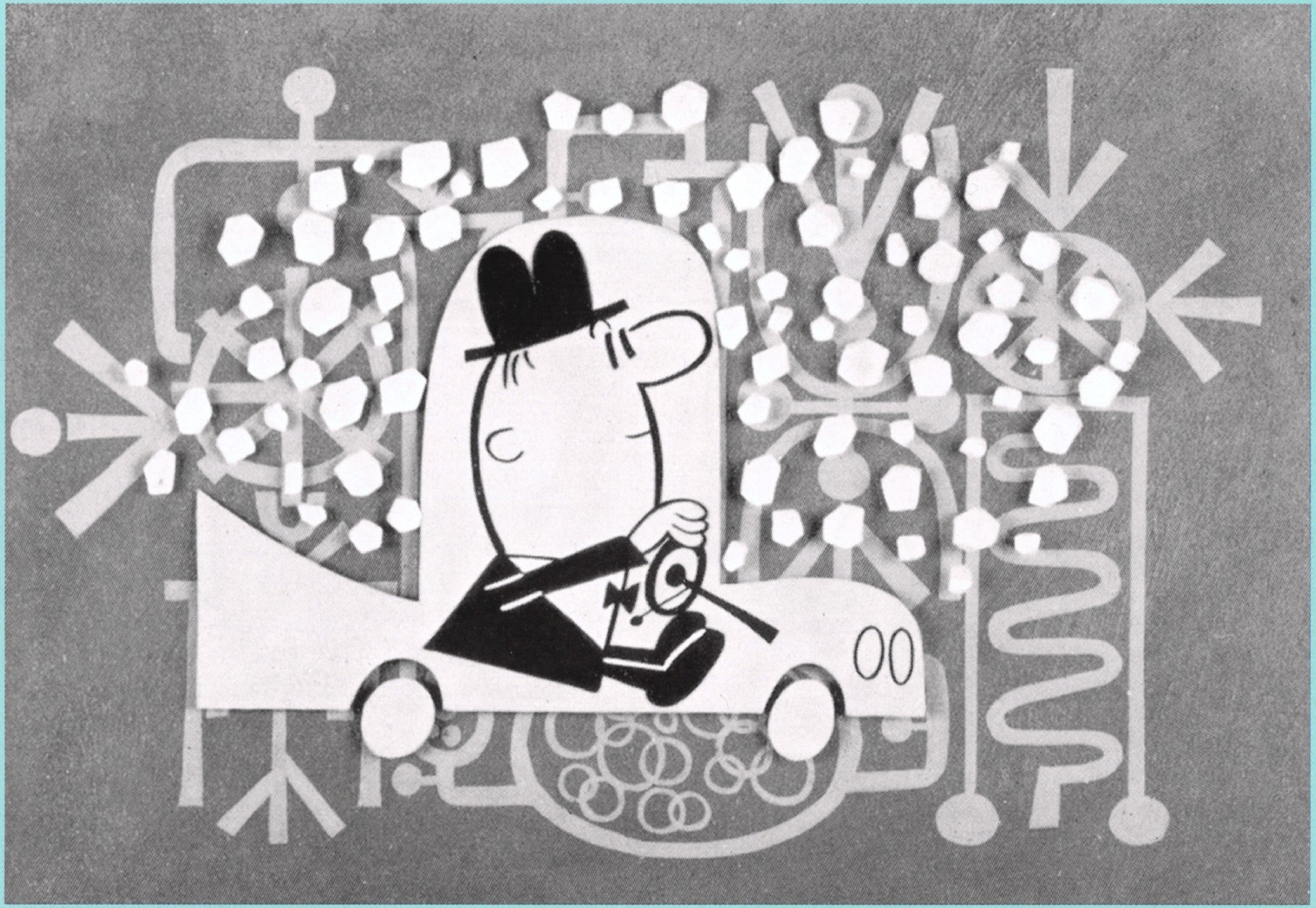
Academy Pictures was a Los Angeles–based TV commercial studio founded in 1949 by UPA business manager Ed Gershman and business partner C. Moray Foutz. The studio relocated to New York in 1954, taking over the former office space of Tempo Productions, which had been forced to shut down because of the blacklist of its two founders, David Hilberman and Bill Pomerance. In New York, Academy rehired many former Tempo staffers, including the studio's head of animation, Vladimir "Bill" Tytla, and designers such as Paul Kim, Ray Favata, Tom Knitch, and Ronald Fritz. Academy was unable to survive the Eisenhower recession of the late 1950s and shut down in 1958.



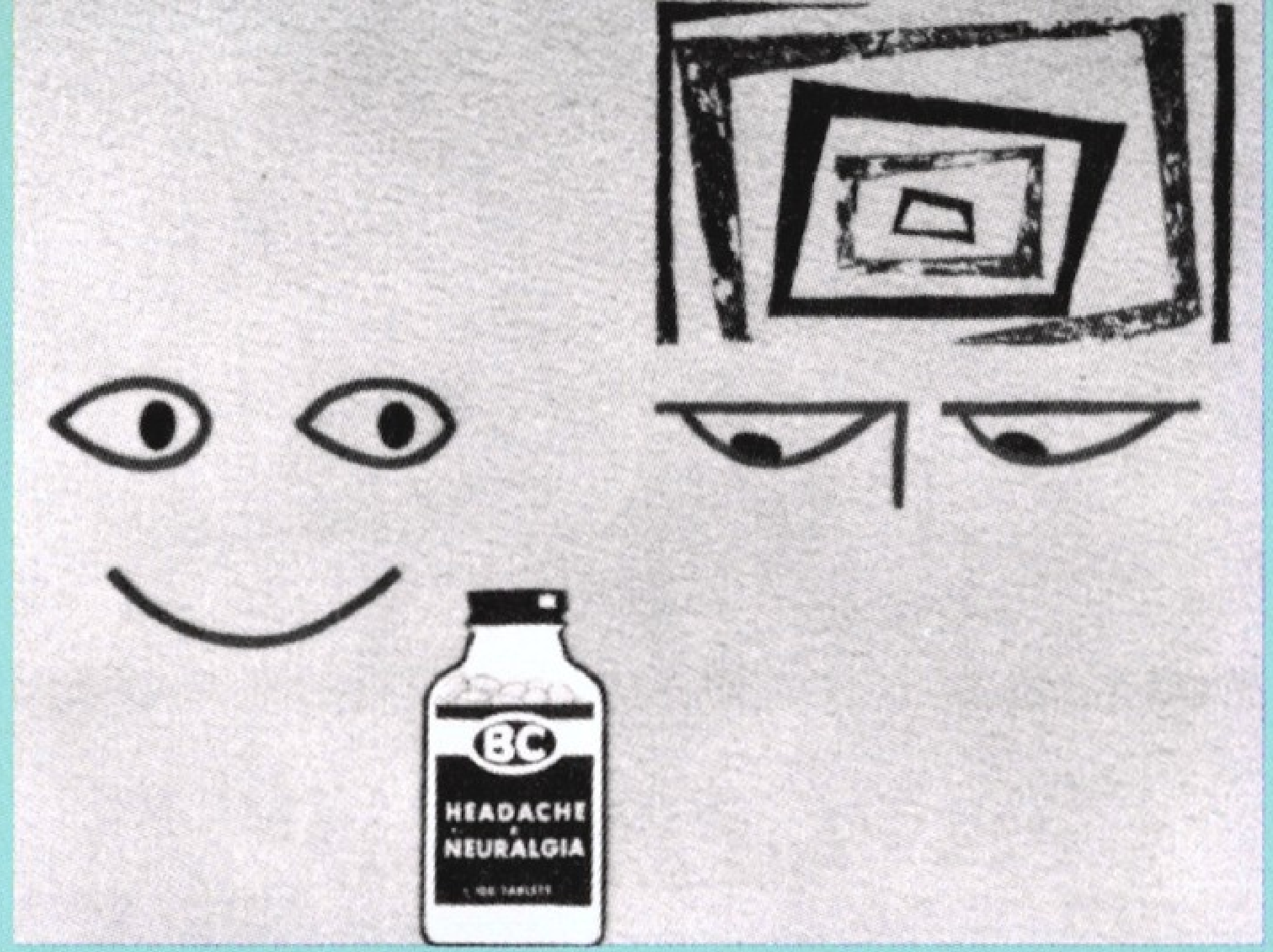
Timken Roller Bearings commercial
Designer: Paul Kim

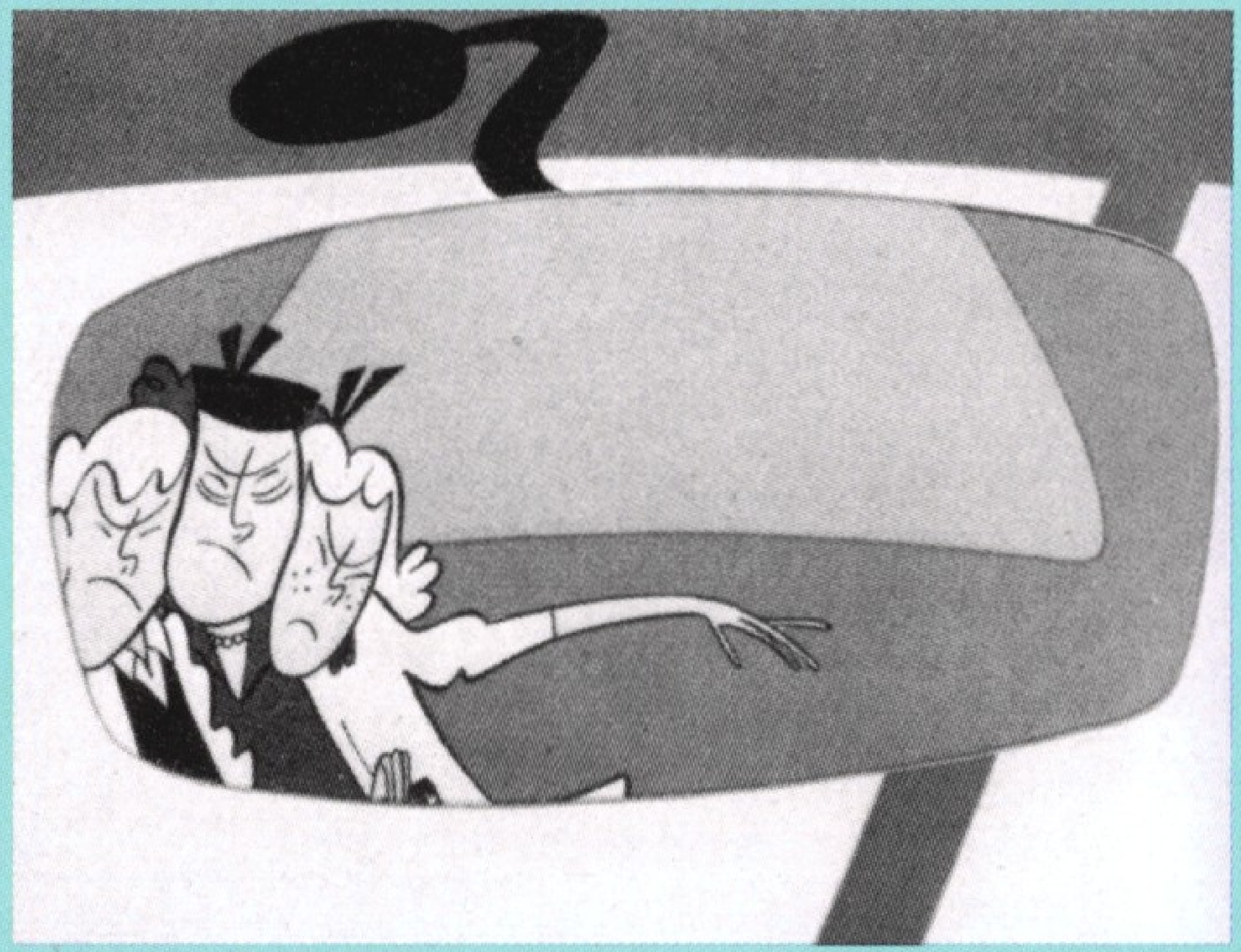


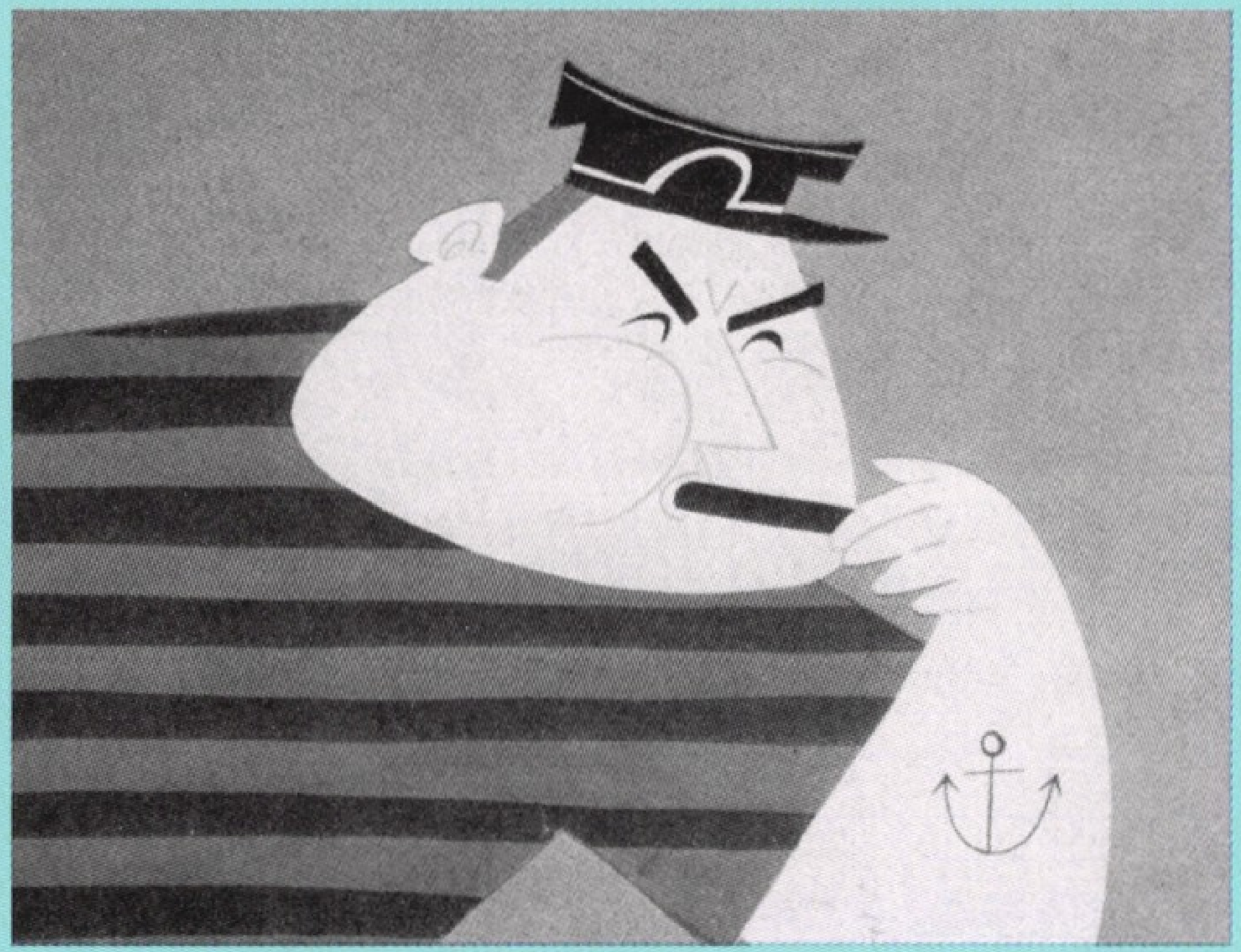
Fleischmann's Yeast commercial
Designer: Paul Kim



Timken Roller Bearings commercial
Designer: Paul Kim







Top: **B-C Headache Tablets commercial**
Designer: Paul Kim

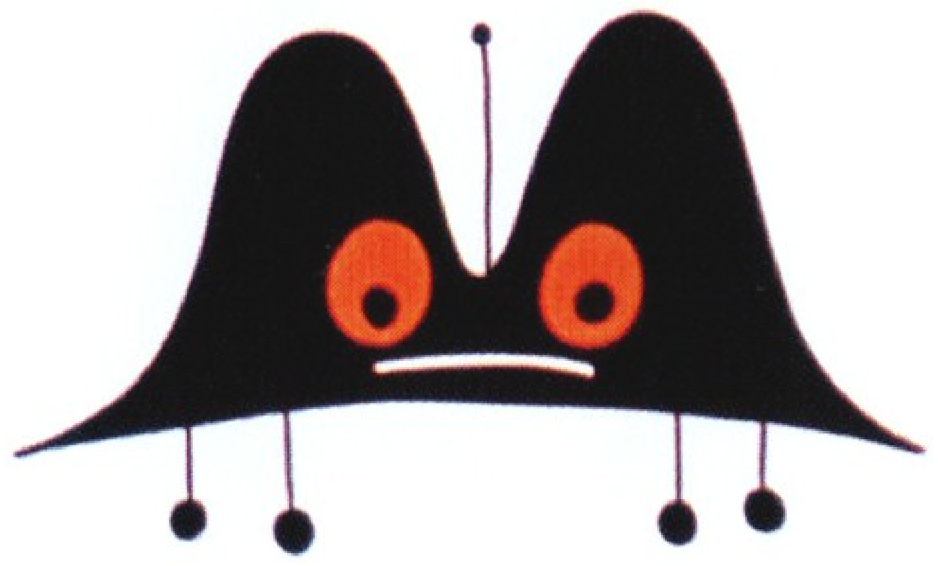
Middle: **Plymouth Chrysler commercial**
Designers: Ray Favata and Tom Knitch

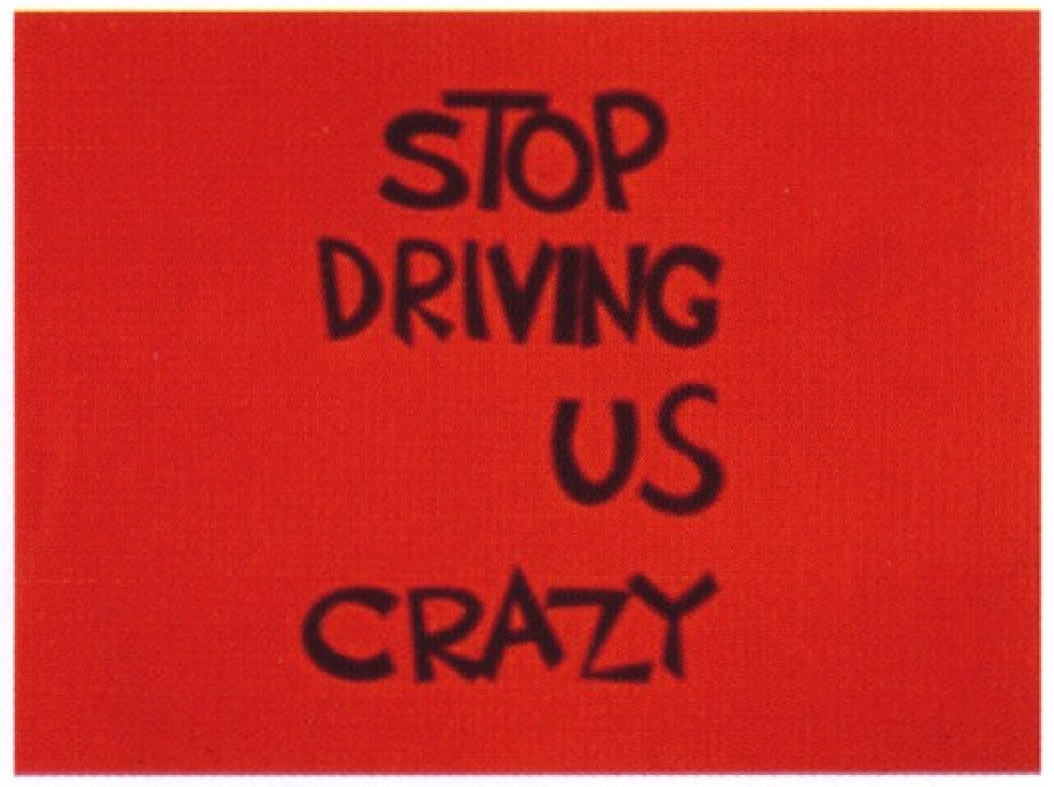
Bottom: **Old Spice Cologne commercial**
Designers: Ray Favata and Tom Knitch

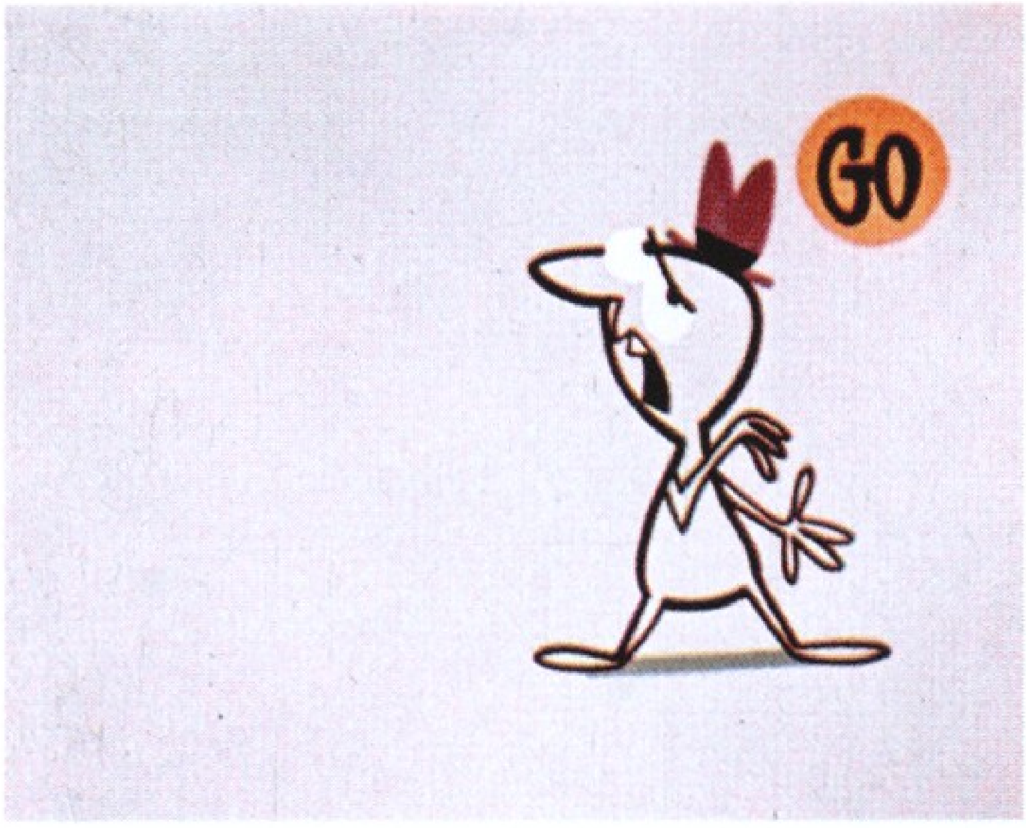
C

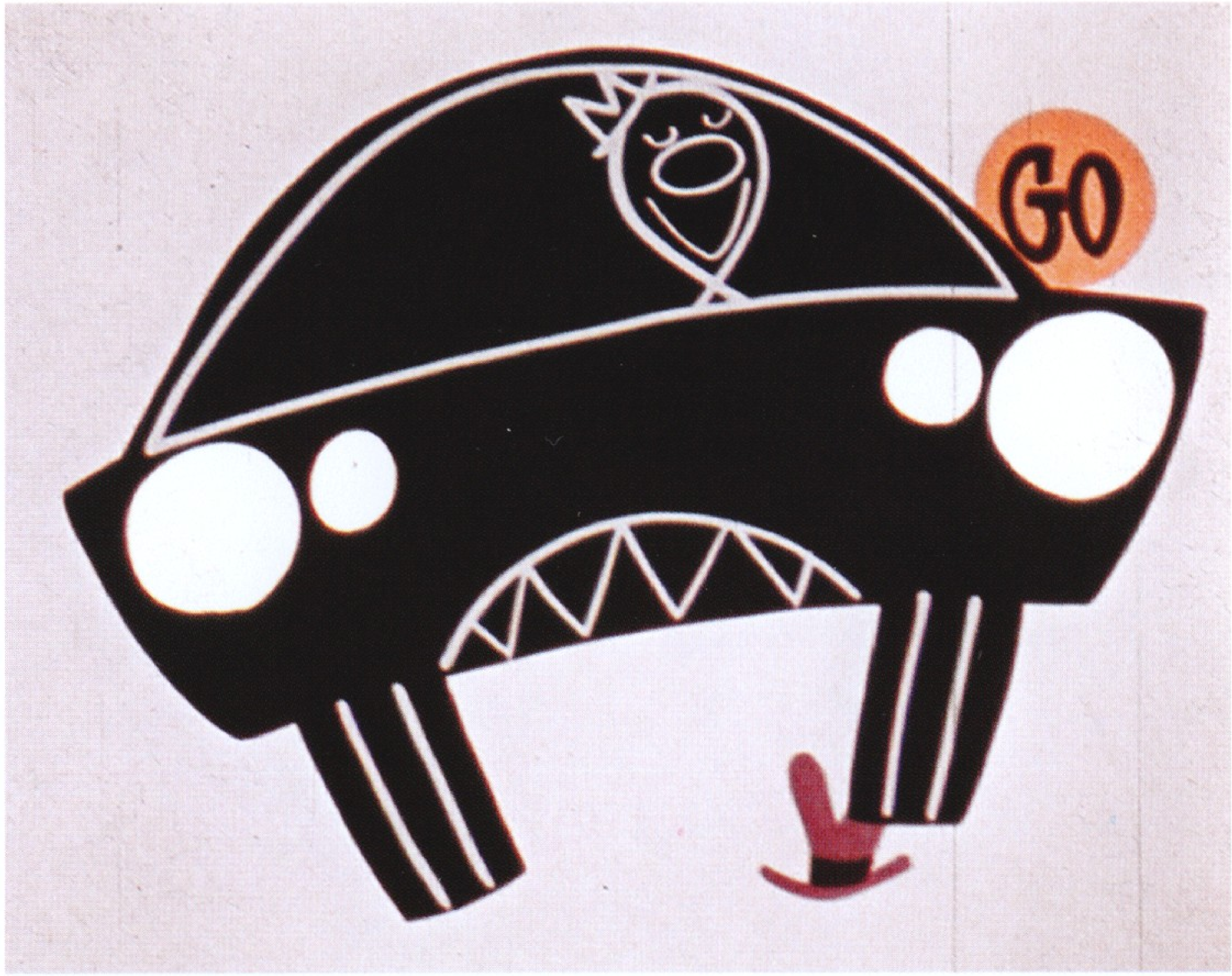
CREATIVE ARTS STUDIO

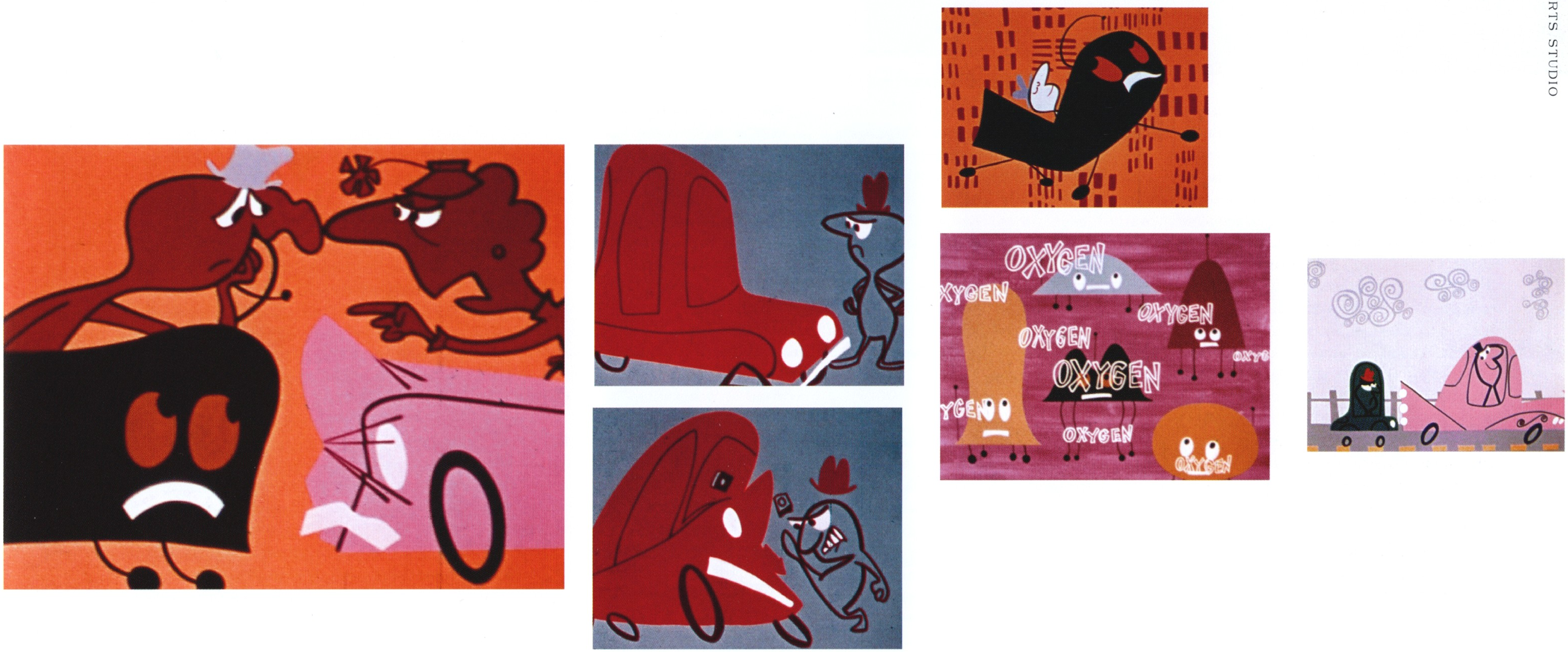
The Department of Motor Vehicles meets Christian morality in *Stop Driving Us Crazy* (1959), a film commissioned by the Methodist Church. Reckless driving is sinful, and the right of way is not as important as "God's Right Way," according to the film's lead character, Rusty, an alien from Mars. The sober lesson in vehicular etiquette is tempered not only by its far-out sci-fi setup but by other decidedly nonconservative elements, such as the ultraflat, clean shapes of Cliff Roberts's character design and the Hard Bop jazz stylings of Benny Golson and Art Blakey & His Jazz Messengers. The film was directed by Mel Emde at the graphic design firm Creative Arts Studio, an infrequent producer of animation. It is not the most inspired design outing by Roberts, and the low-budget production prevents thoughtful translation of his designs into animation, but the offbeat marriage of gospel, design, and jazz atones for the weaknesses of the film.










OXYGEN
XYGEN
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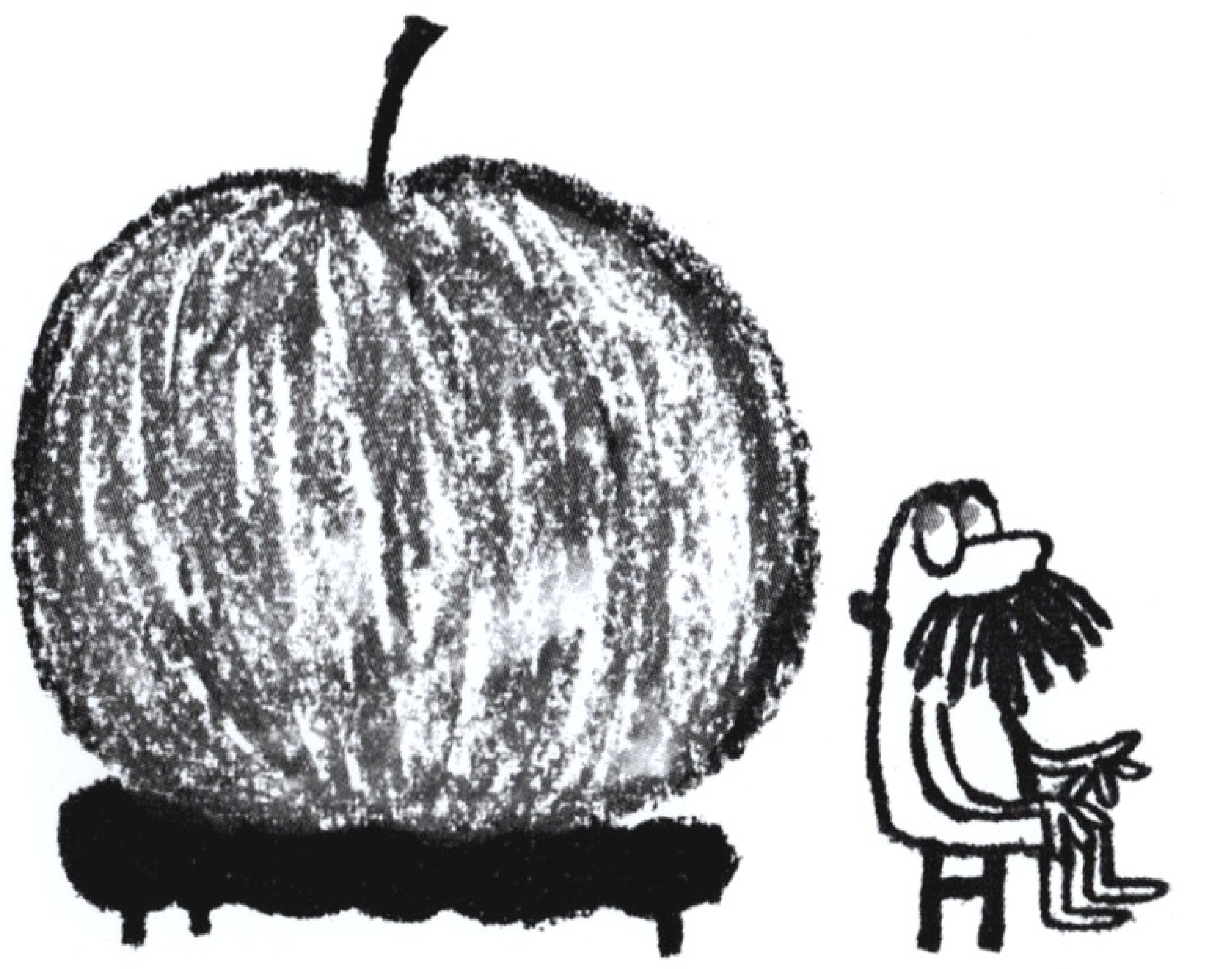
Stop Driving Us Crazy **(1959)**
Director: Mel Emde
Film stills

ELEKTRA FILMS



Above: **Capezio Shoes commercial**
Designer: Paul Harvey

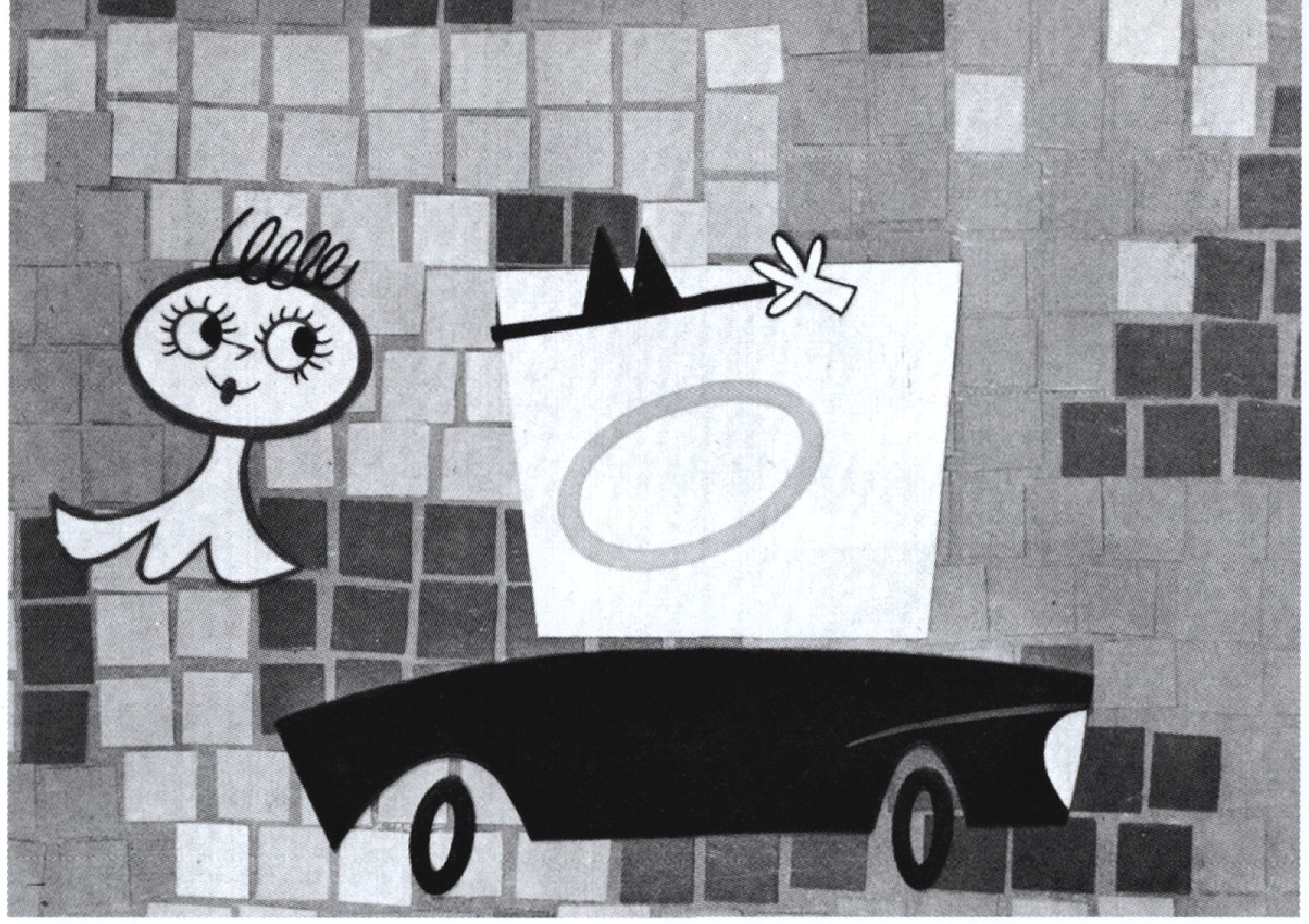
Whereas most commercial animation studios preferred to work within the parameters of an identifiable "house style," which didn't vary much from commercial to commercial, Elektra Films prided itself on being one of New York's most eclectic and creative commercial animation studios. The studio, which was started in 1956 by designer-director Abe Liss and businessman Sam Magdoff, produced television spots in every conceivable cartoon style as well as utilizing pixilation, abstraction (notably in the opening titles for the NBC series *Wide Wide World*), and other innovative graphic devices, such as a spot for Esso Oil where a cat is designed from its letters, *c*, *a*, and *t*. Elektra Films' stylistic diversity can largely be attributed to the stellar group of talent that studio cofounder Liss surrounded himself with; the roster of directors and designers who worked at Elektra in the late 1950s and early 1960s reads like a who's who of New York's progressive animation scene: Jack Goodford, Lee Savage, Pablo Ferro, Cliff Roberts, Paul Harvey, Fred Mogubgub, Dolores Cannata, George Cannata Jr., and Hal Silvermintz. Elektra's production manager, Larry Pomerance, recalls, "[Liss] always wanted to get the top people. If you were good, you had a good shot at working for him."

Liss also felt responsibility as a TV commercial producer to challenge audiences with thoughtful material. He offered an insight into his principled approach to commercial production in a 1962 *New Yorker* piece:

> *What we do at Elektra is try to have some respect for the audience. No talking down. . . . The horrible part of this business is it's very competitive, and you usually wind up working for everybody who asks you. Still, I like to think that if you're an artist, you try to find your way in many areas. Every problem has its special solution. We always try for a new and fresh approach—not loud. My attitude is we're imposing on the audience; we have an obligation to entertain it.*

Abe Liss arrived to the animation industry via an unconventional route. Liss was the son of immigrant parents from Lithuania who settled in Paterson, New Jersey, where he was born in 1916. He decided early on in his life that he wanted to become a sculptor and dropped out of high school when he received a scholarship to study sculpture at the Art Students League under the tutelage of William Zorach. Liss later received a scholarship to a college in Maine, where he also studied sculpture. During the Depression, he worked in the Civilian Conservation Corps and created sculptures through the Works Progress Administration's Federal Arts Project (the New Deal program that provided jobs for unemployed artists). With the arrival of World War II, Liss was recruited to become the art director of the Office of Strategic Services and moved to Washington, D.C., to work at the Pentagon. In 1944, he moved to Los Angeles and landed his first animation job at Graphic Films, an industrial film studio operated by Les Novros. Liss continued to sculpt while he was in Los Angeles, mostly as a hobby but also accepting the occasional professional assignment, including a commission to create a series of sculptures for a home garden designed by landscape architect Garrett Eckbo.

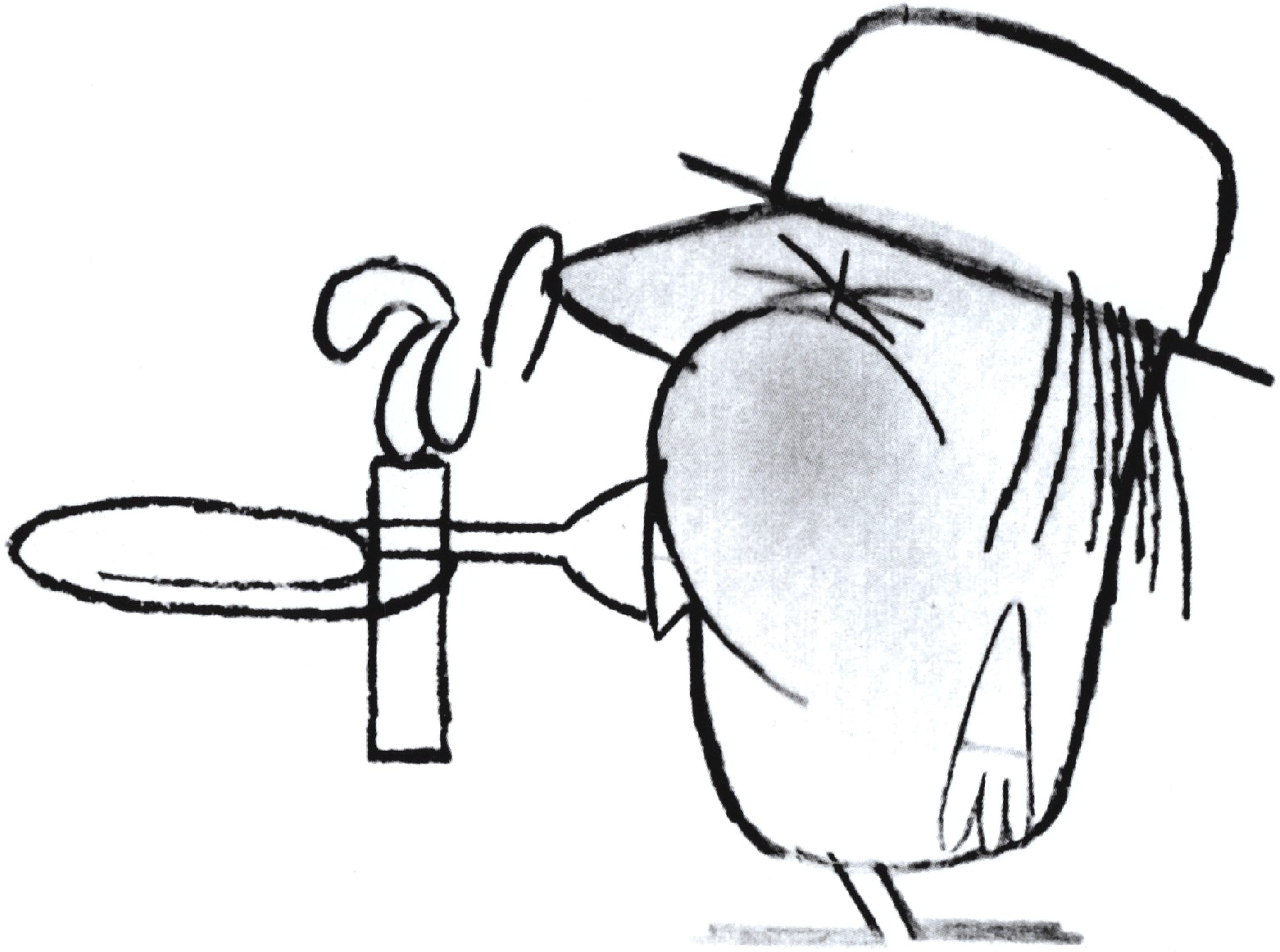
In the late 1940s, Liss was hired at UPA as a layout artist and received his first screen credit for layout design on the Oscar-nominated short *Trouble Indemnity* (1950). His training as a sculptor was noticeably evident in his animation work, according to UPA background painter Bob McIntosh, who recalls that the layout drawings he would receive from Liss were roughly sketched and had a sculptural aesthetic that concentrated on delineating the larger forms over details. Following *Trouble Indemnity*,



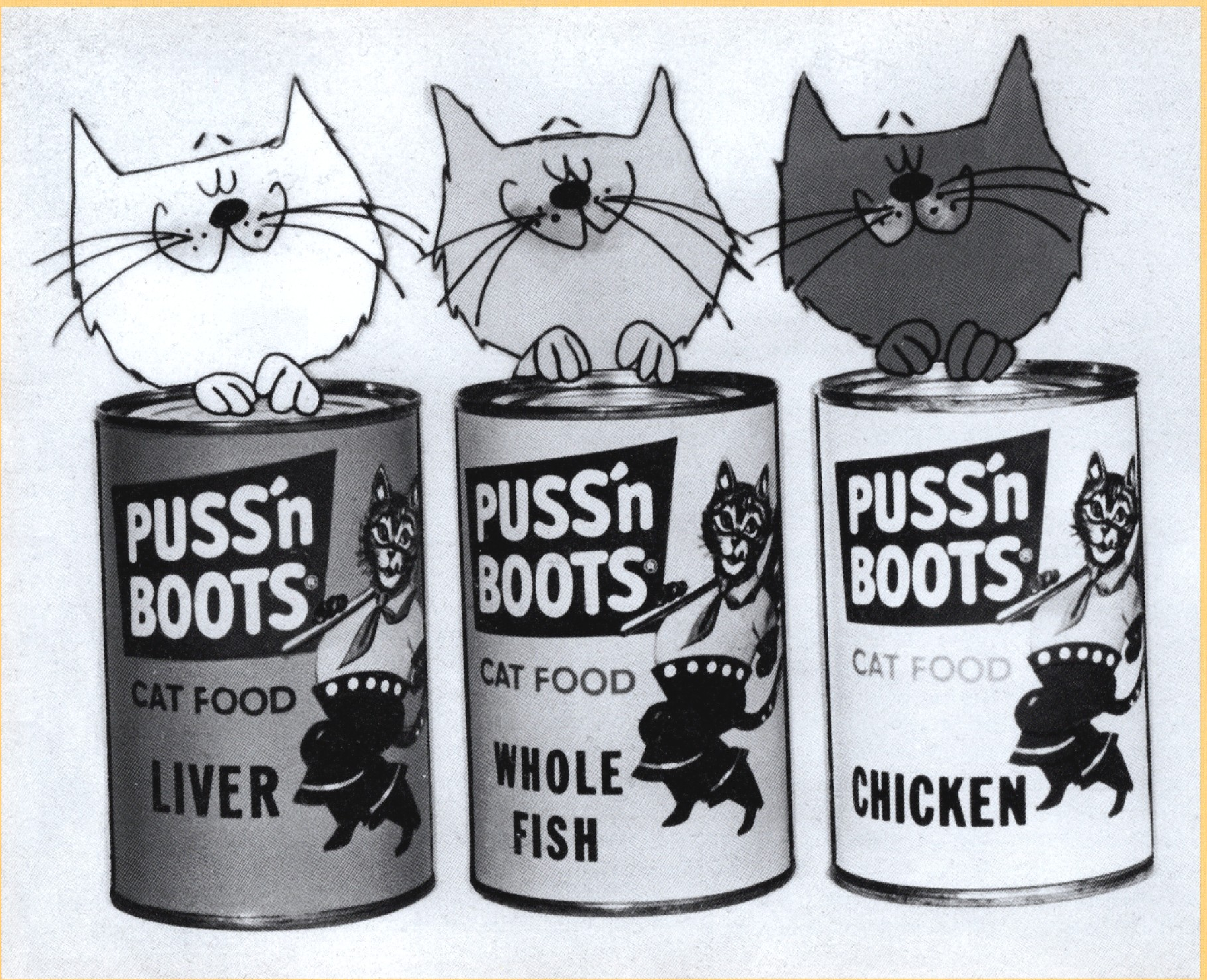
Esso Imperial commercial
Designer: T. Collins

Liss designed six more Mister Magoo films and directed a short, *Spare the Child* (released in 1955), before being transferred to the East Coast in 1951 to become the creative director of UPA's fledgling New York commercial division. For reasons that remain unclear, Liss didn't last long in his new role at UPA-NY. He left to go work at Tempo Productions before accepting a position as the creative director of Transfilm, a job he held until starting Elektra Films in 1956.

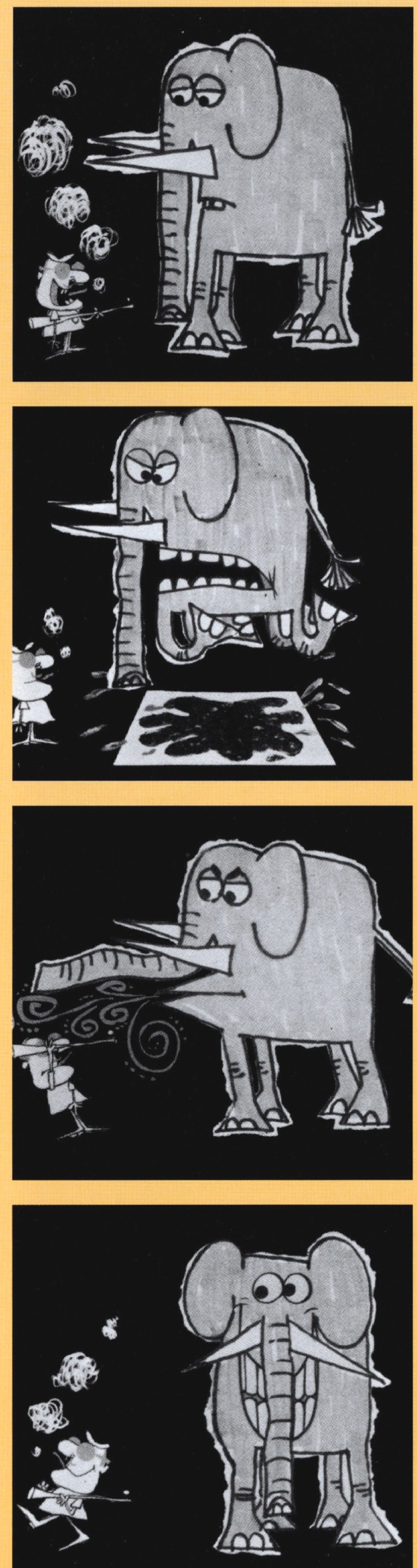
Throughout his career, Liss espoused a variety of social causes. He gave work to blacklisted writers like Maurice Rapf and Sam Moore and produced Gordon Parks's first film, the live-action documentary *Flavio* (1962). Liss also produced a handful of other short films, including a personal film called *Genesis*, the industrial film *Litho* for the American Lithographer's Union, and *Hook the Hawk*, a CBS-commissioned film based on the drawings of fine artist Carder Hazard Durfee. Liss passed away from a heart attack in December 1963, at the age of 47. At the time of his death, he'd been attempting to launch an animated project with Pablo Picasso.



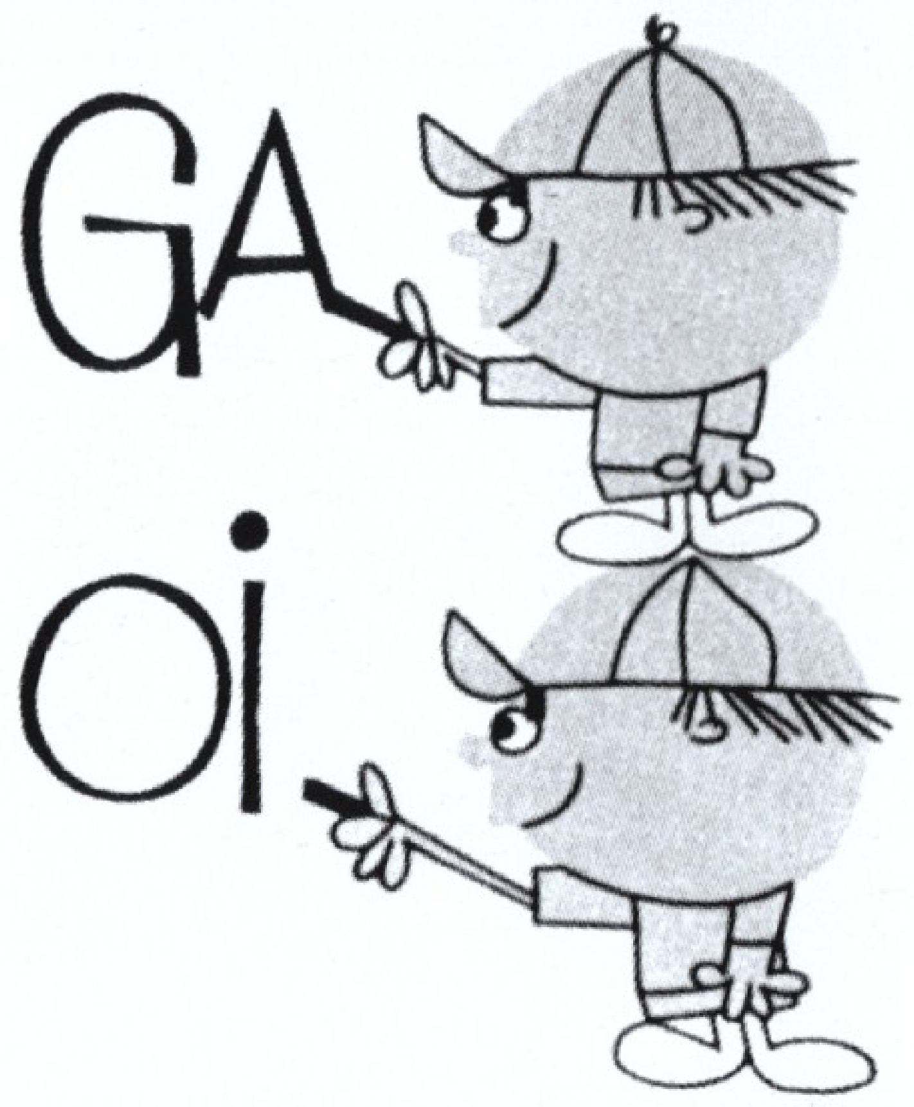
Ford commercial
Designer: Irv Spector


PUSS'n BOOTS
CAT FOOD
LIVER
PUSS'n BOOTS
CAT FOOD
WHOLE FISH
PUSS'n BOOTS
CAT FOOD
CHICKEN

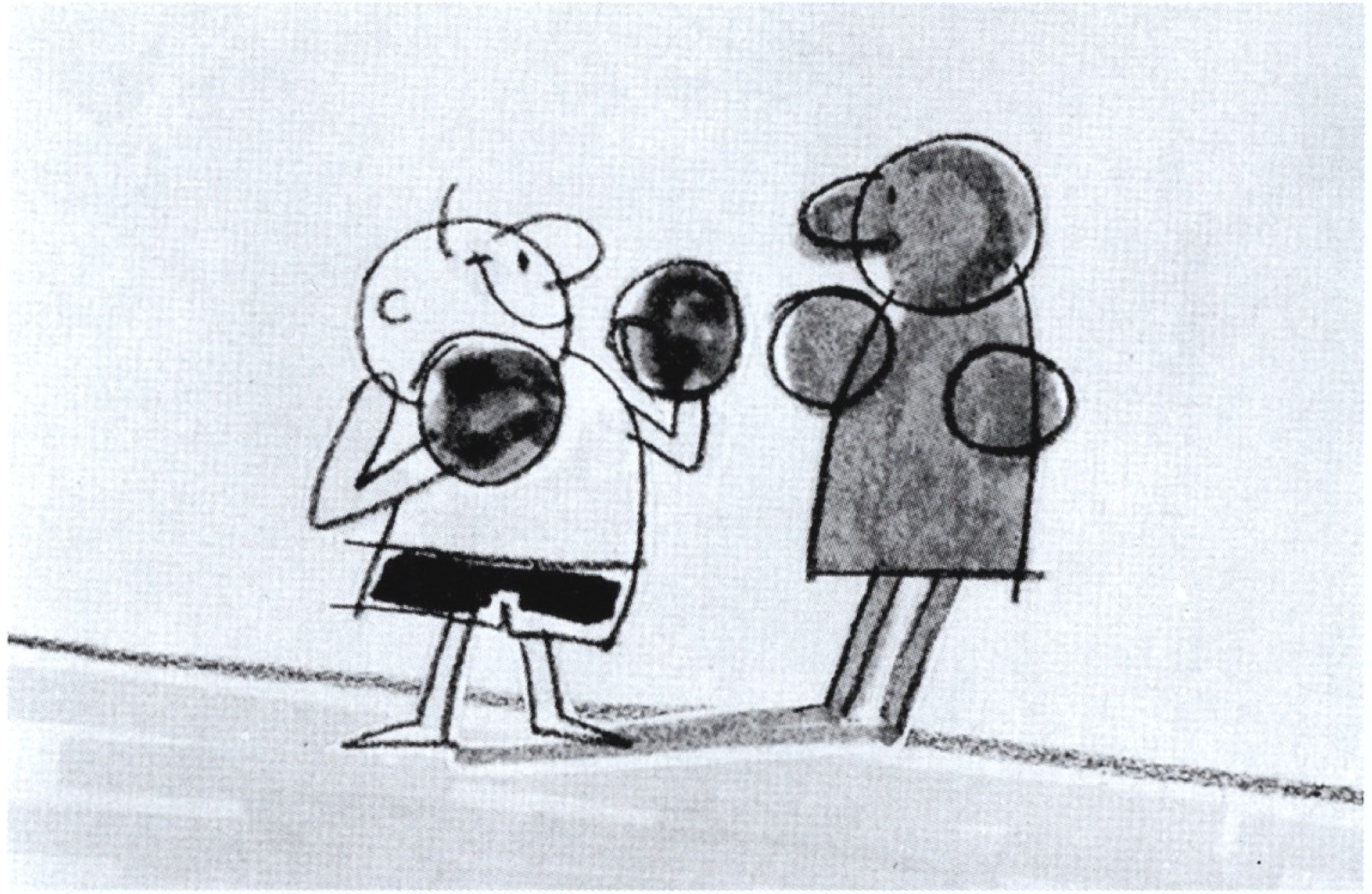
Puss 'n Boots commercial
Designer: Dolores Cannata

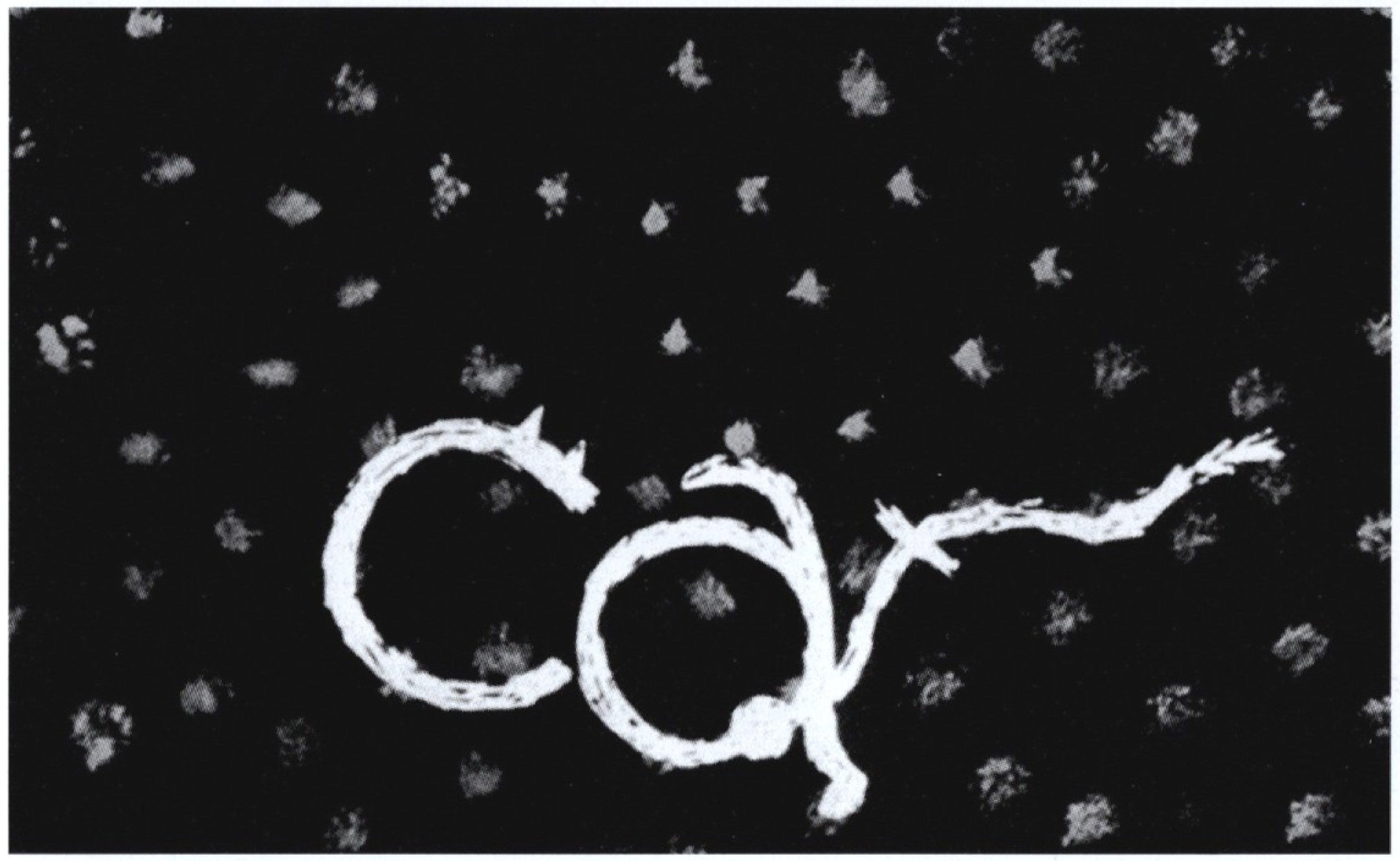


Sandran Tile commercial
Designers: Len Glasser,
Pablo Ferro, and Paul Harvey



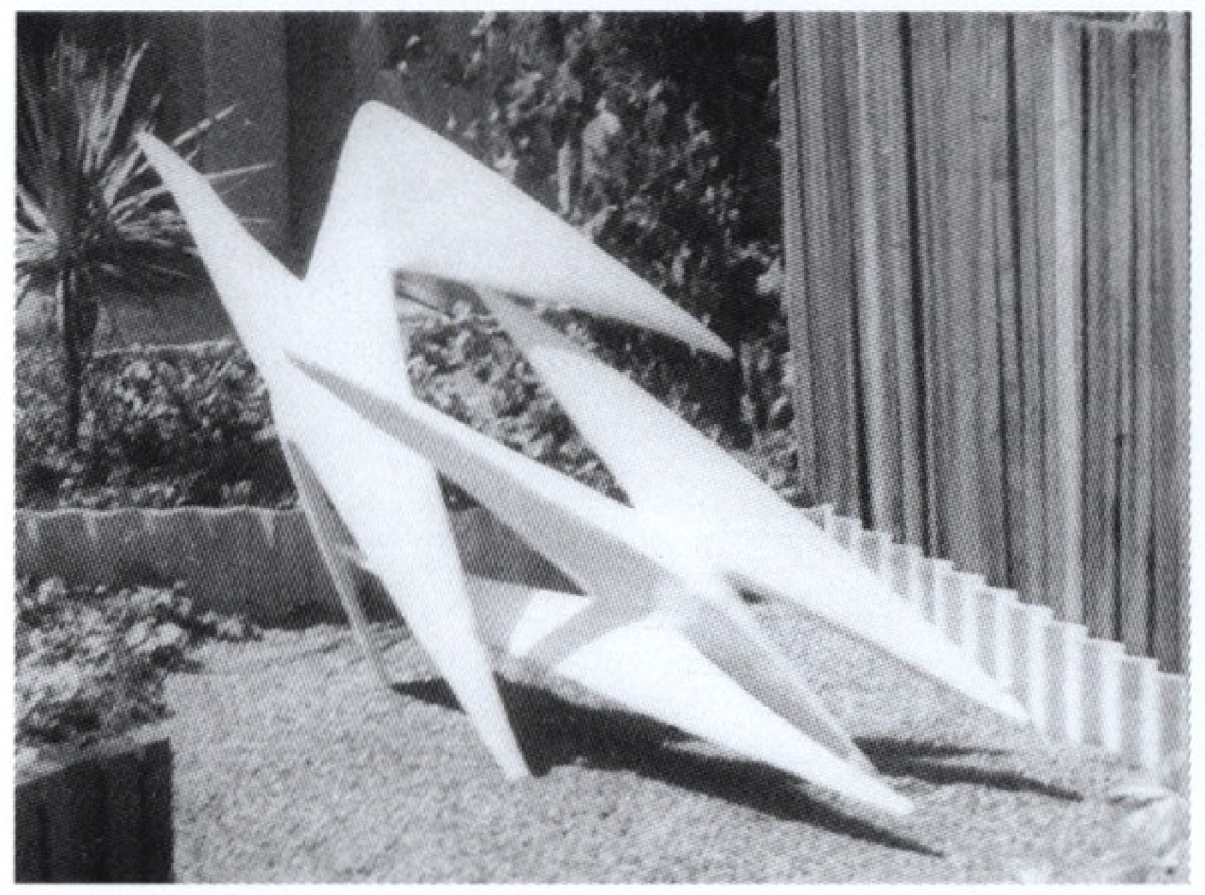
Ford commercial
Designer: Jack Goodford

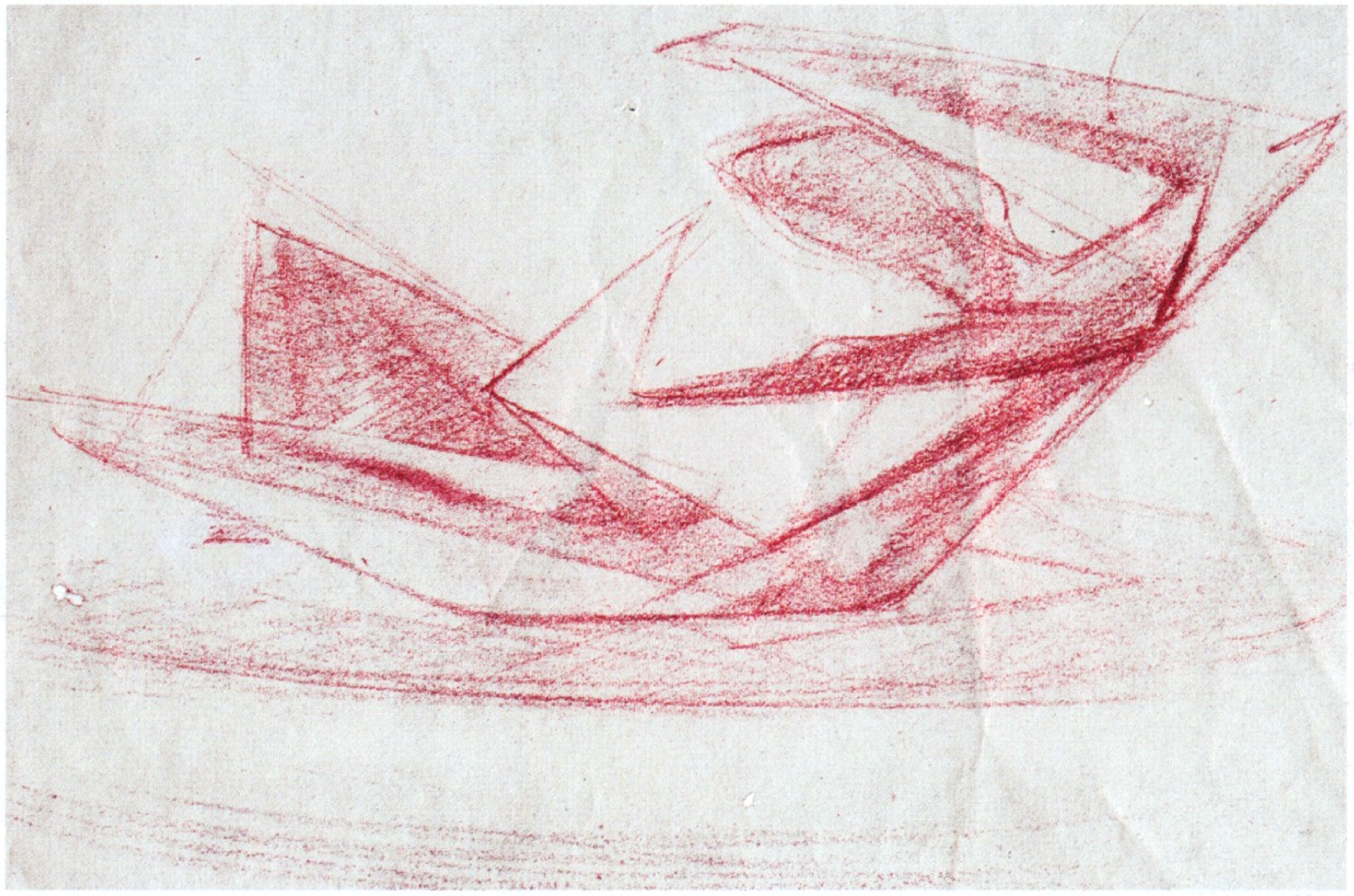




Top: **WABC-TV station promo**
Designer: Abe Ajay

Above: **Esso Oil Heat commercial**
Designer: Paul Harvey





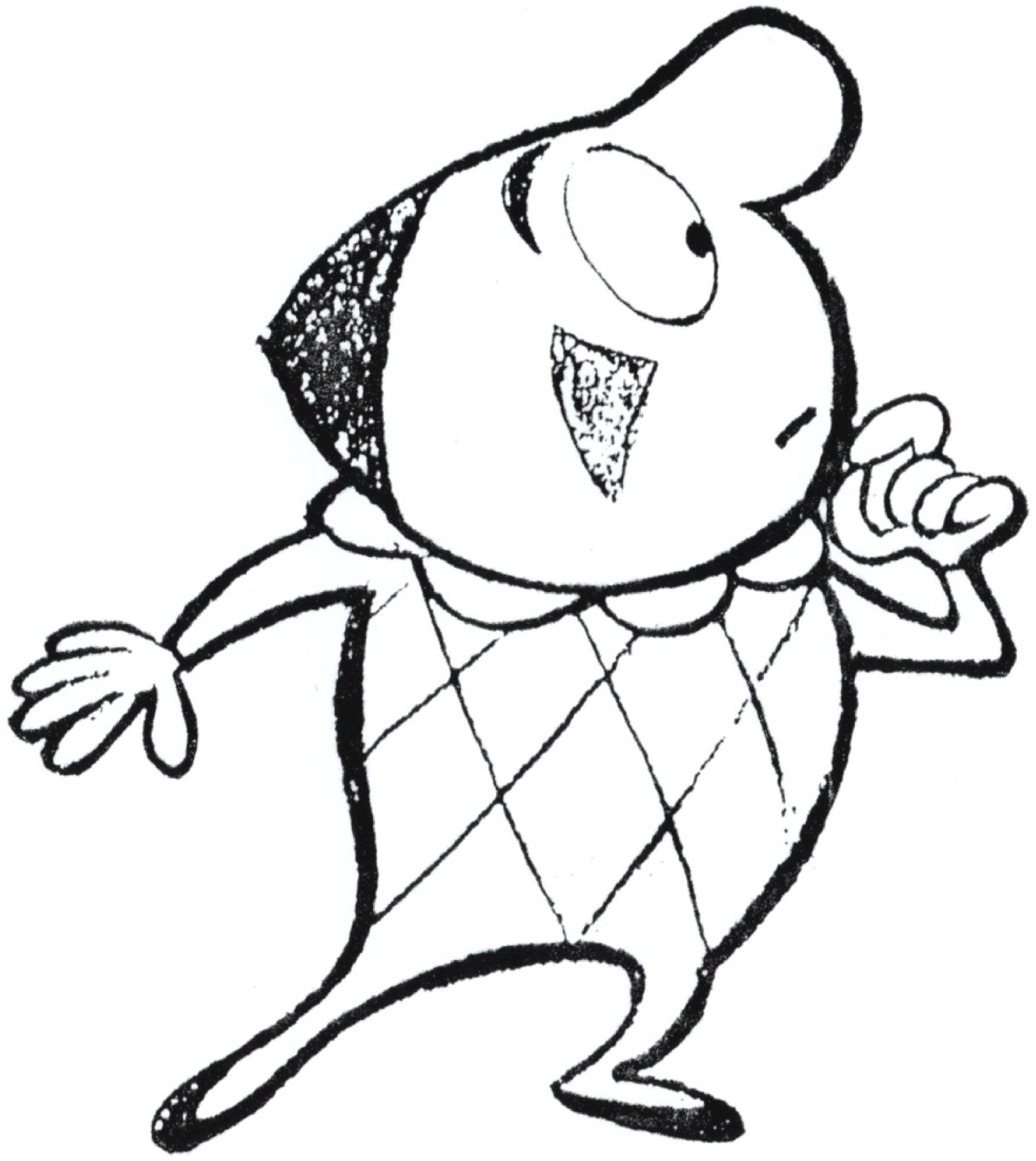
This Abe Liss sketch for a sculpture project (and a similar finished garden sculpture from the 1940s) offers an insight into his aesthetic sensibilities and hints at the type of drawing style that Liss used when he worked at UPA as a layout artist.

F

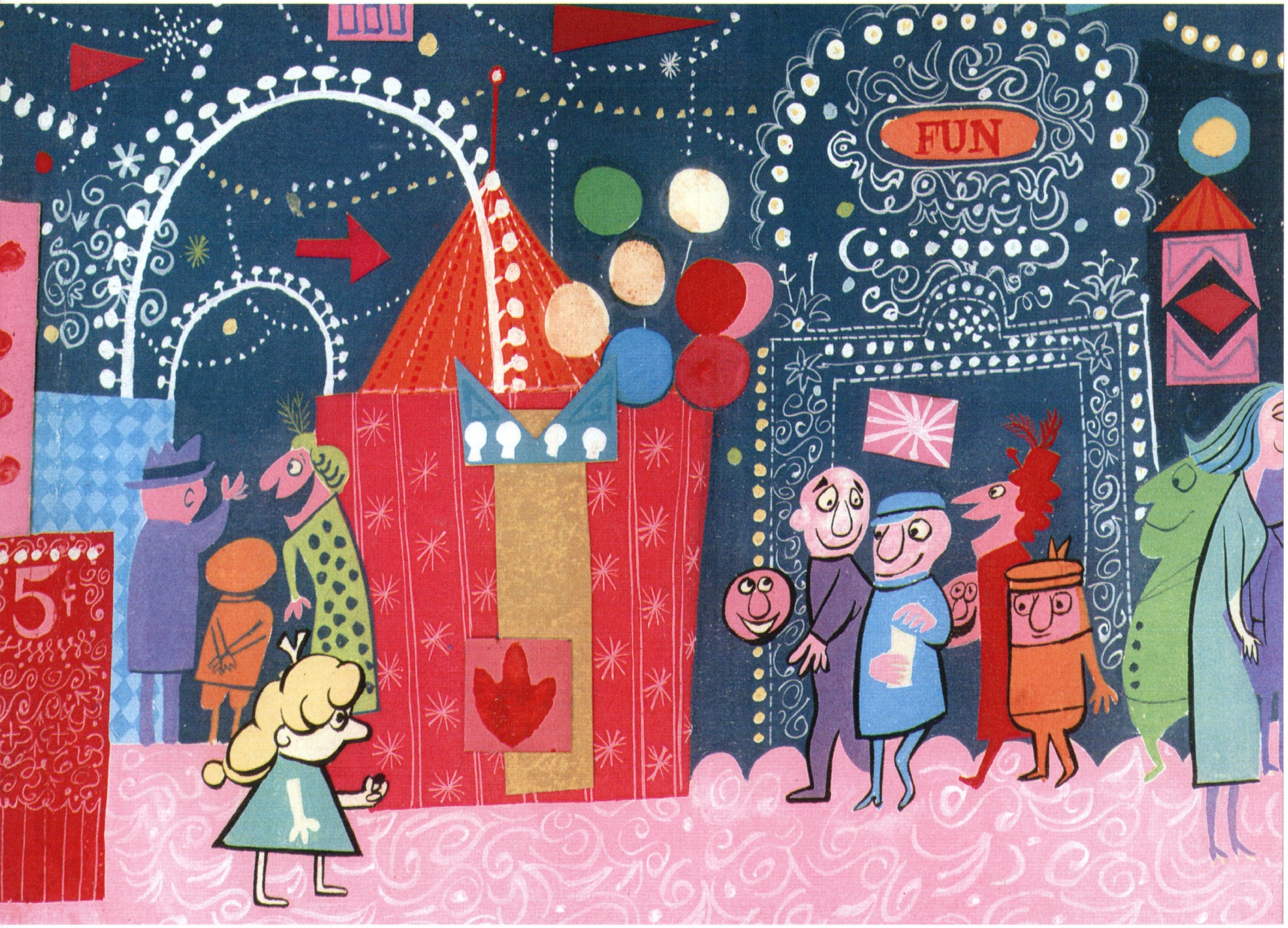
FINE ARTS FILMS

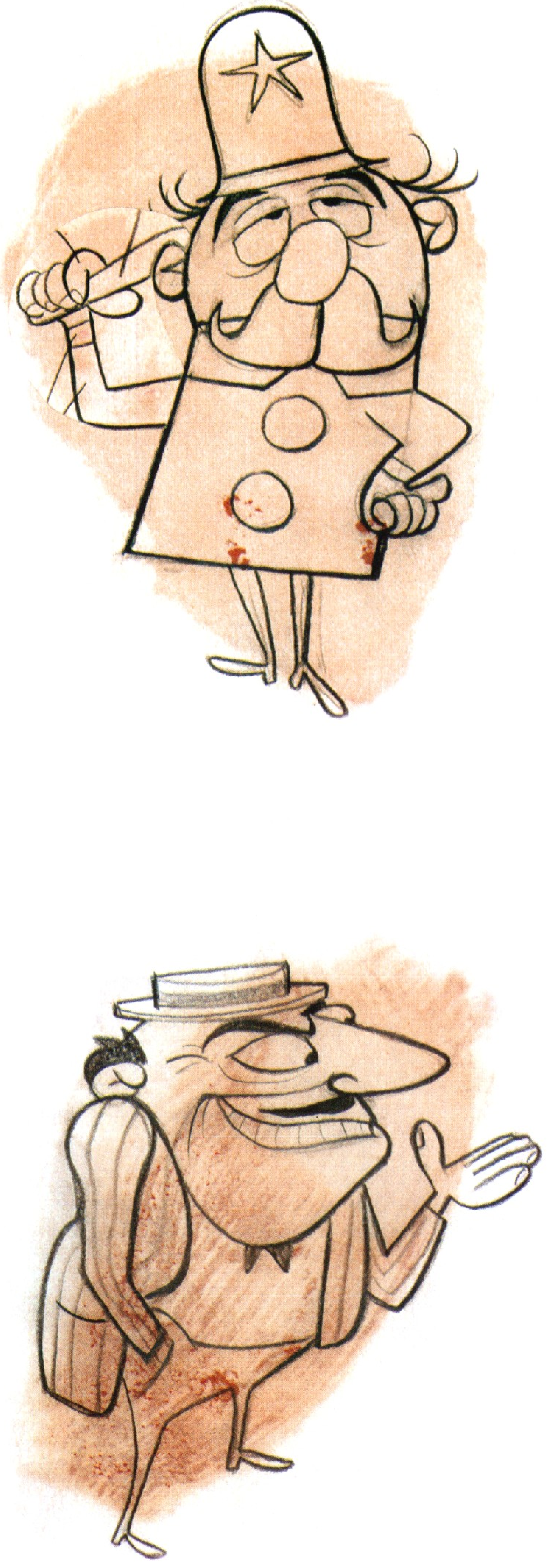
John Wilson's belief that animation was a medium with the capacity for greatness is apparent from his company's name: Fine Arts Films. Wilson (b. 1920) began in the art department of Pinewood Studios in England before turning to animation in 1945 at J. Arthur Rank's newly formed Gaumont-British Animation. Wilson emigrated to the United States in 1950 and worked in layout and animation at UPA and Disney before opening his own studio in 1954. His first independent project was *Tara, the Stonecutter* (1955), an artfully designed short film that used printed Japanese papers throughout to decorate rooftops, interiors, and characters' clothes.

With *Tara* as his calling card, Wilson was able to convince NBC to produce a thirteen-minute version of Igor Stravinsky's *Petroushka*. One of the earliest animated specials produced for television, it aired in 1956 as a segment on *The Sol Hurok Music Hour*. Stravinsky himself rearranged and conducted the abridged version of the score. The film is created in a completely modern idiom with vibrant color styling and thoughtfully composed layouts throughout. It was designed by John Wilson and Dean Spille, with layouts by Spille, Bernard Gruver, and David Hanan.

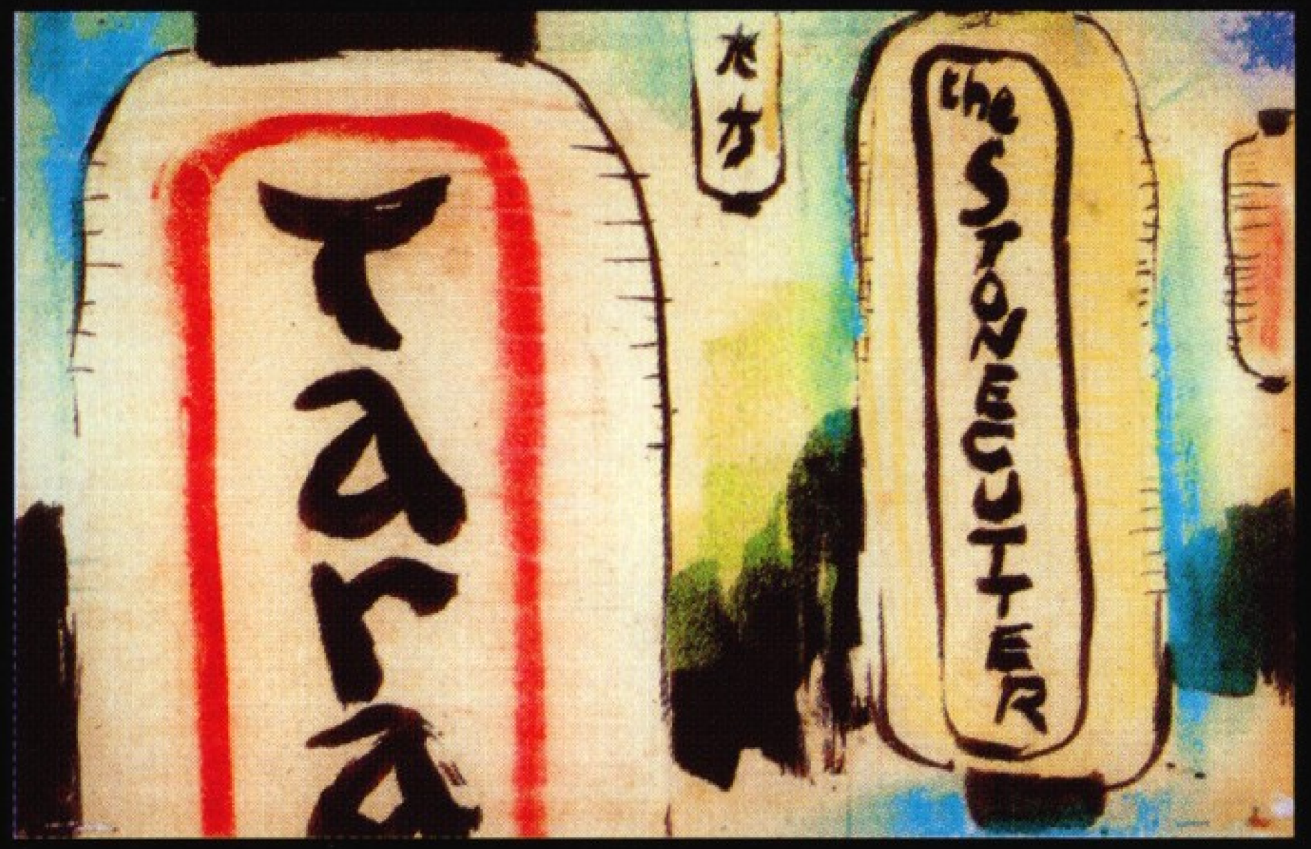


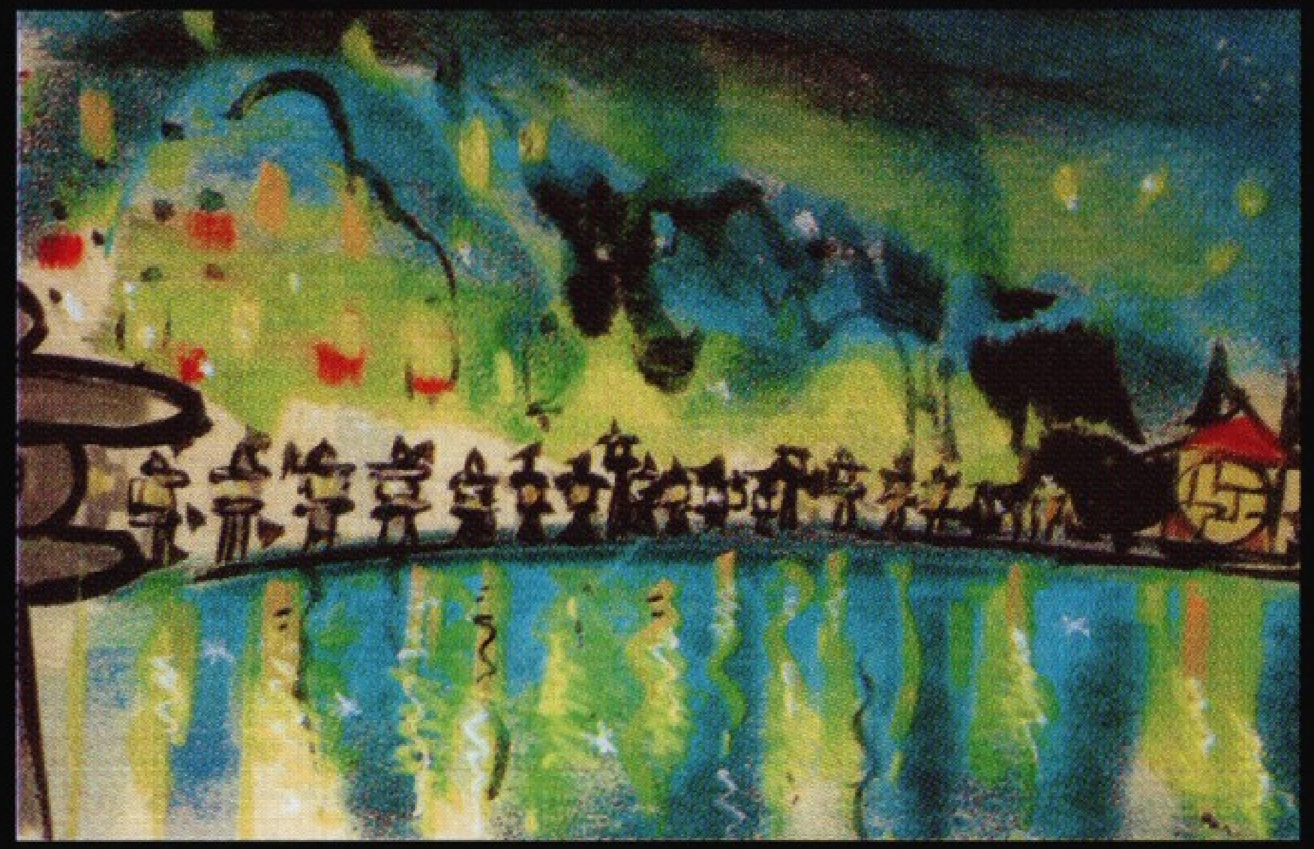
***PETROUSHKA* (1956)**
Director: John Wilson
Left: Animation drawing
by Bill Littlejohn
Opposite: Production cel
and background

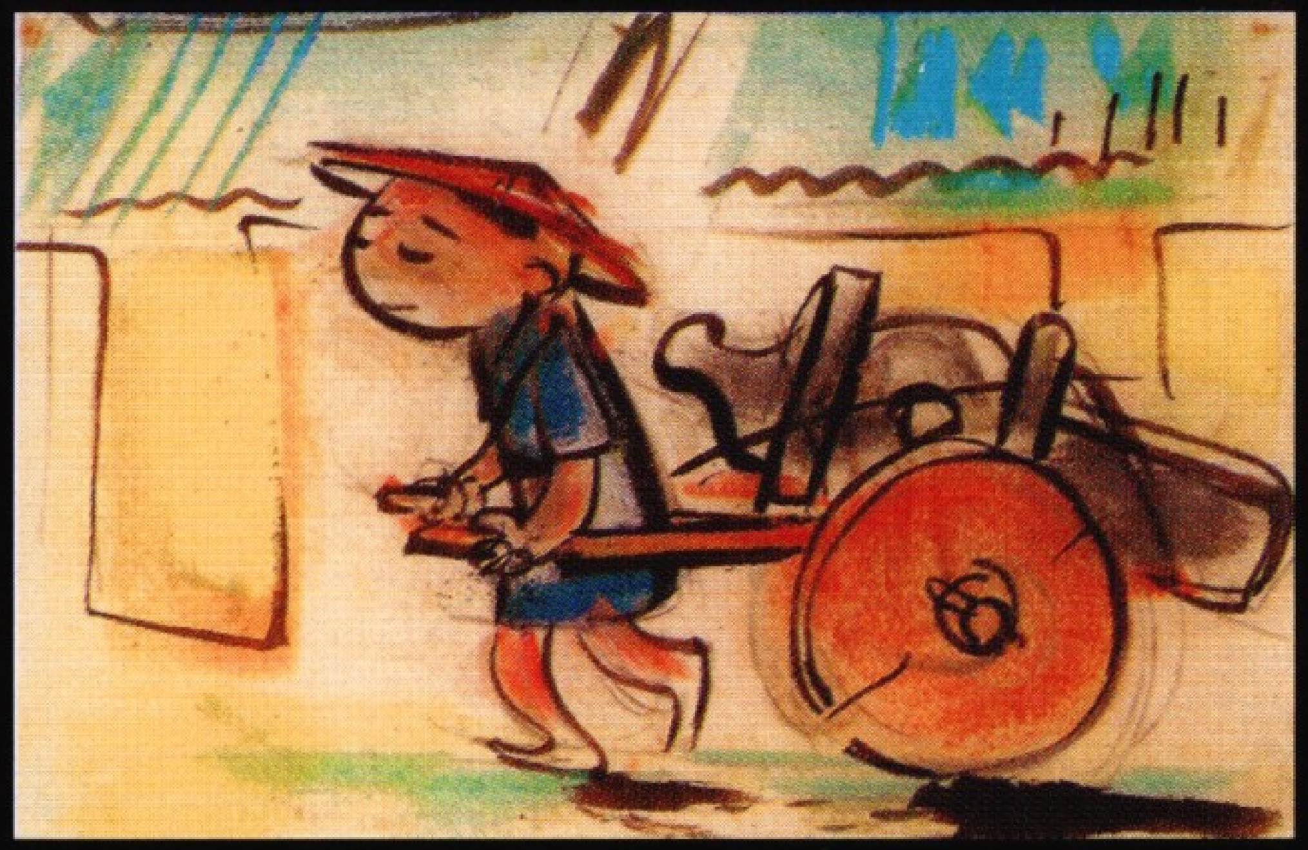




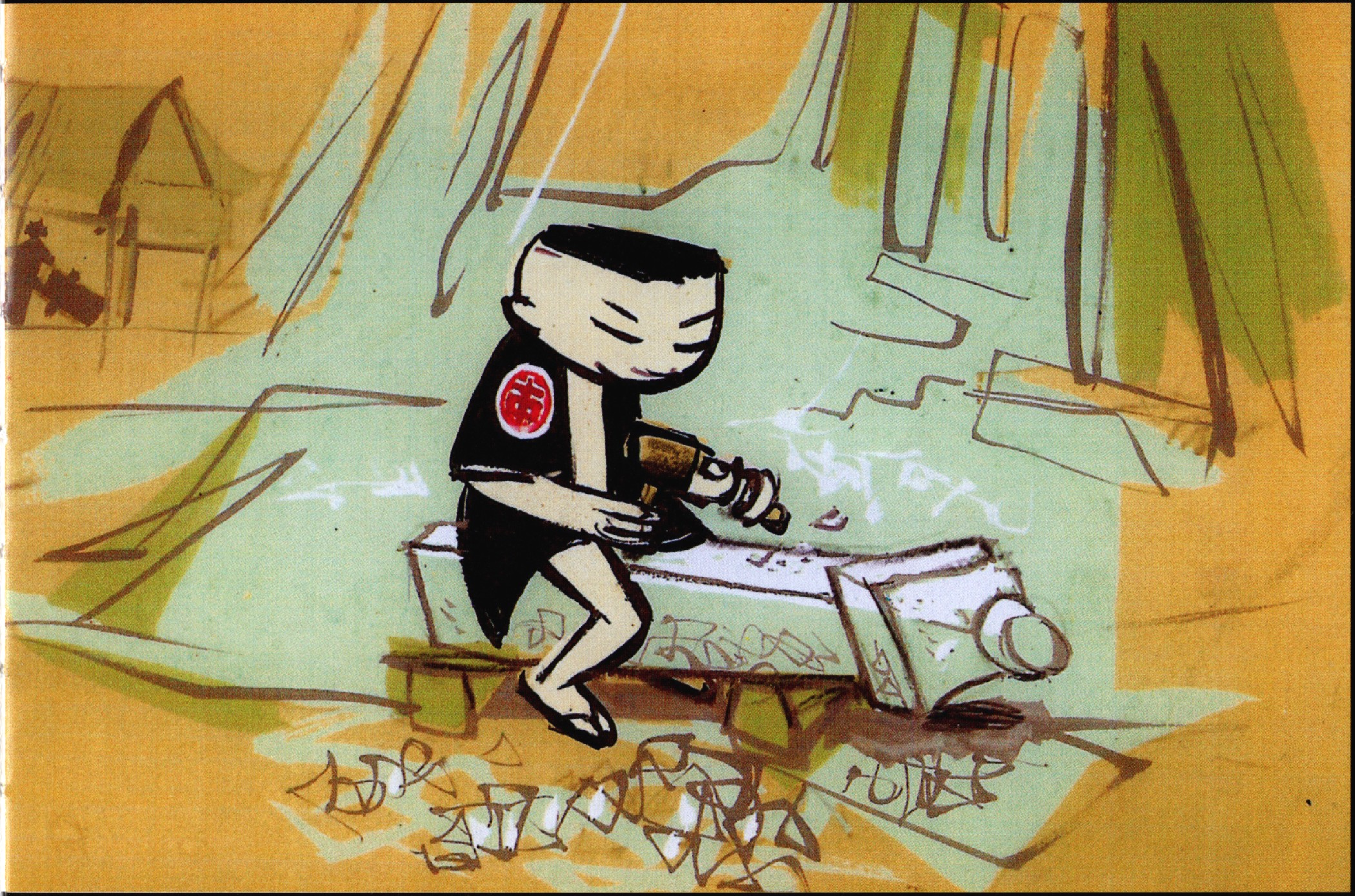
***Petroushka* (1956)**
Director: John Wilson
Above: Background painting
Right: Model sheet by Wilson

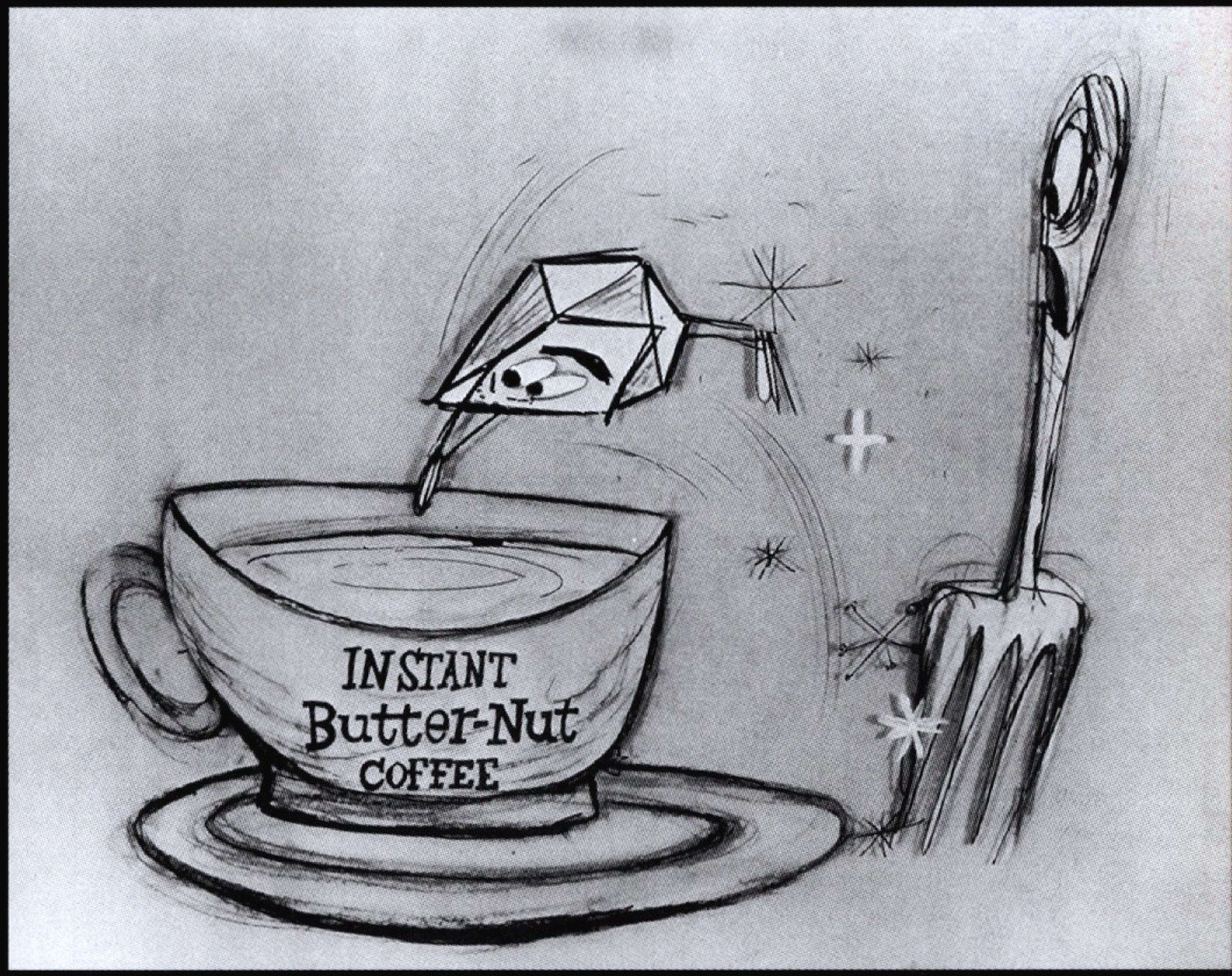

Tara
the STONECUTTER





Left and below left: ***Tara, the Stonecutter*** **(1955)**
Director: John Wilson
Storyboards by Wilson




INSTANT
Butter-Nut
COFFEE

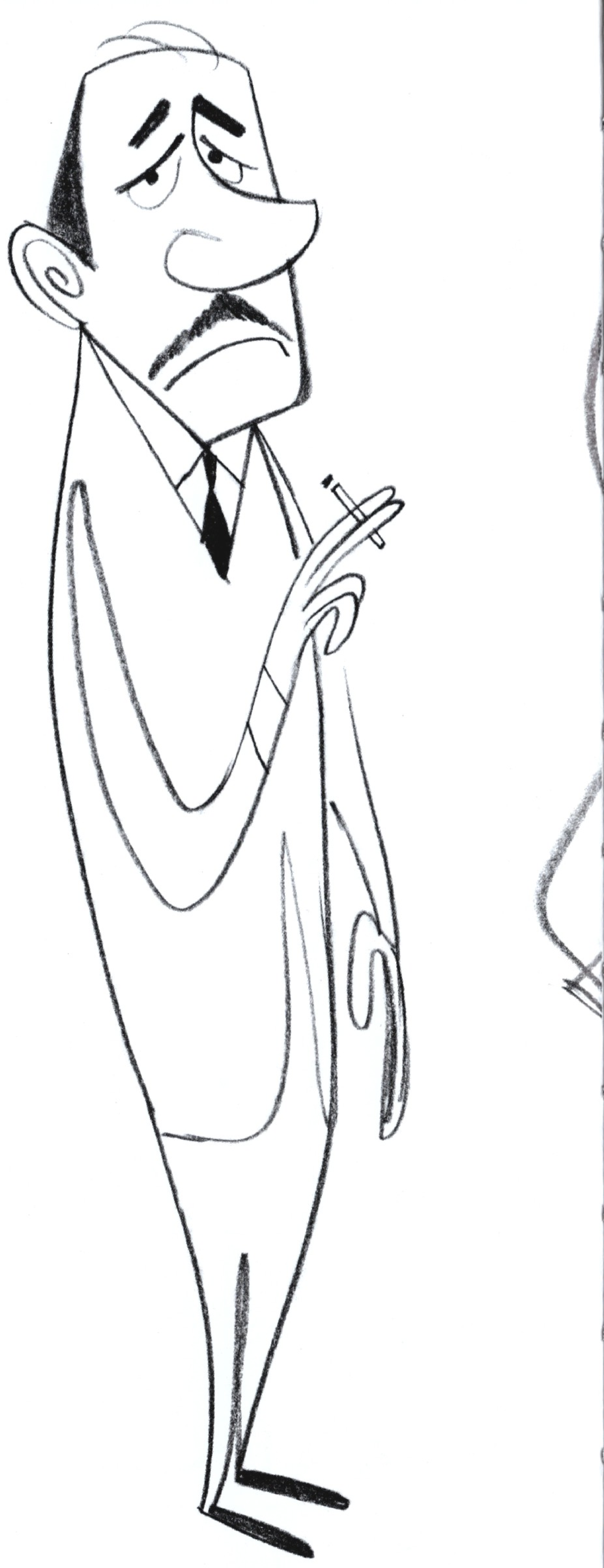
Above: **Butter-Nut Coffee commercial**
Designers: Dean Spille
and Chris Jenkyns
Production cel

G

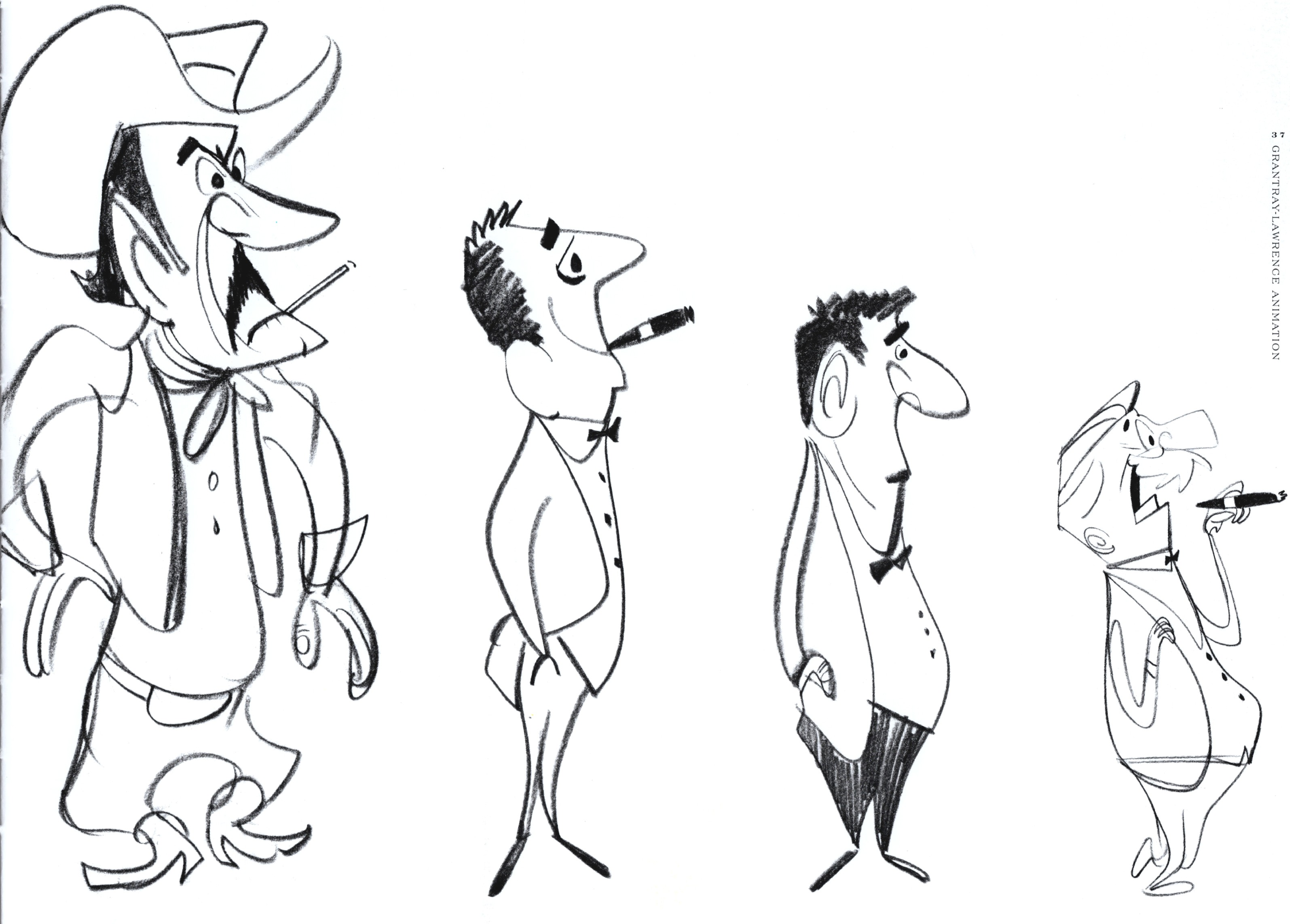
GRANTRAY-LAWRENCE ANIMATION

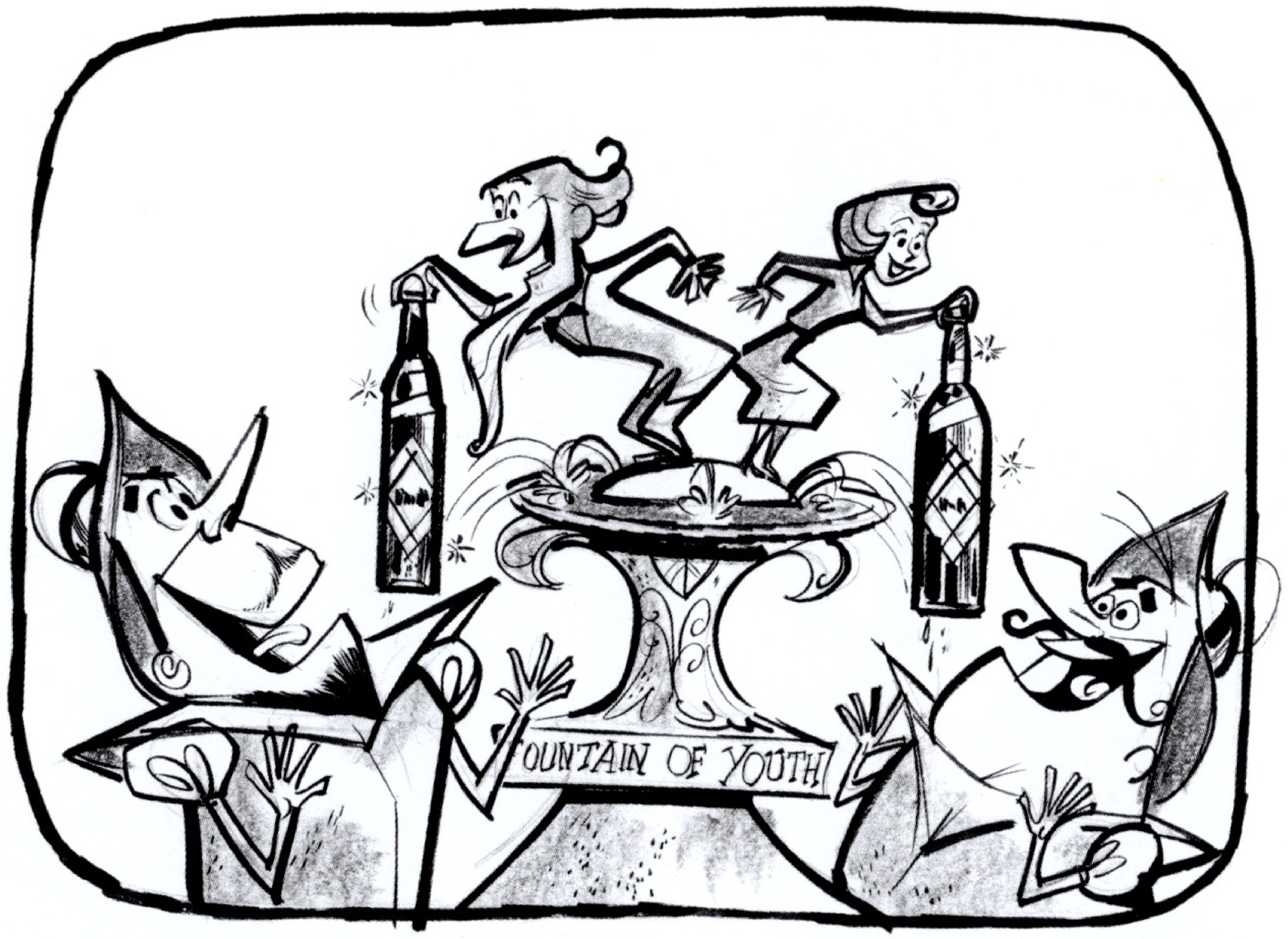
"When I was doing commercials in the fifties, a lot of guys were doing some pretty far out characters. I didn't do that. I would draw a nice-looking mom and dad, and a couple cute kids." Thus, eschewing the extreme stylization of many of his animation contemporaries, Gene Hazelton (1919–2005) instead combined an understated modernity with effortless charm. The result: characters that were "not necessarily cute, but appealing." Hazelton started his animation career at Disney in 1939, eventually working his way into becoming an assistant in the Character Model Department, which at the time boasted many of the studio's most accomplished artists, including Martin Provensen, Jack Miller, Ed Penner, Campbell Grant, John Ployardt McLeish, and Jim Brodero. These artists all understood the art of cartoon appeal, and Hazelton cites his apprenticeship in this department as a formative experience. He also singles out another Disney artist, animator Freddie Moore, as a major influence on his drawing style. His later work as a designer places these early Disney influences into a modern context.

Following a short stint at Warner Bros., where Hazelton designed the model sheet for Bob Clampett's tour de force *Coal Black and de Sebben Dwarfs* (1943), he was drafted into the U.S. Navy. After World War II, Hazelton returned to animation, this time at MGM, where he served as a utility designer and layout artist for both the Bill Hanna–Joe Barbera unit (which produced the Tom & Jerry shorts) and Tex Avery's unit. A solid example of Hazelton's design work from this period can be seen in Avery's *Farm of Tomorrow* (1954). Hazelton's earliest work in TV animation was a moonlighting gig done for Bill Hanna while at MGM; the assignment was to design a stick-figure Lucy and Ricky for the animated titles of *I Love Lucy*. In 1955, Hazelton became the head designer and art director for Grantray-Lawrence Animation, a commercial studio started by former MGM animators Grant Simmons and Ray Patterson in partnership with New York commercial producer Robert Lawrence. He designed hundreds of commercials for Grantray-Lawrence through the early 1960s before embarking on a successful career as the artist of *The Flintstones* and *Yogi Bear* newspaper comics.

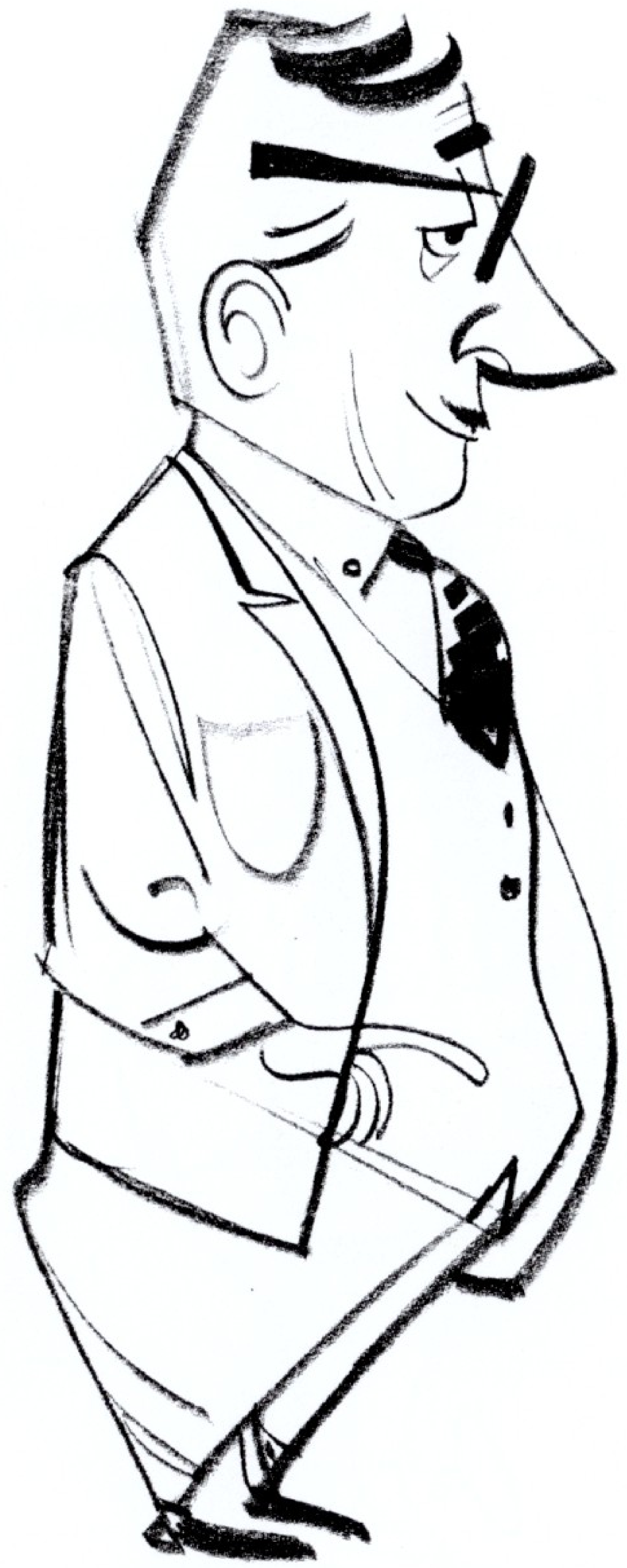


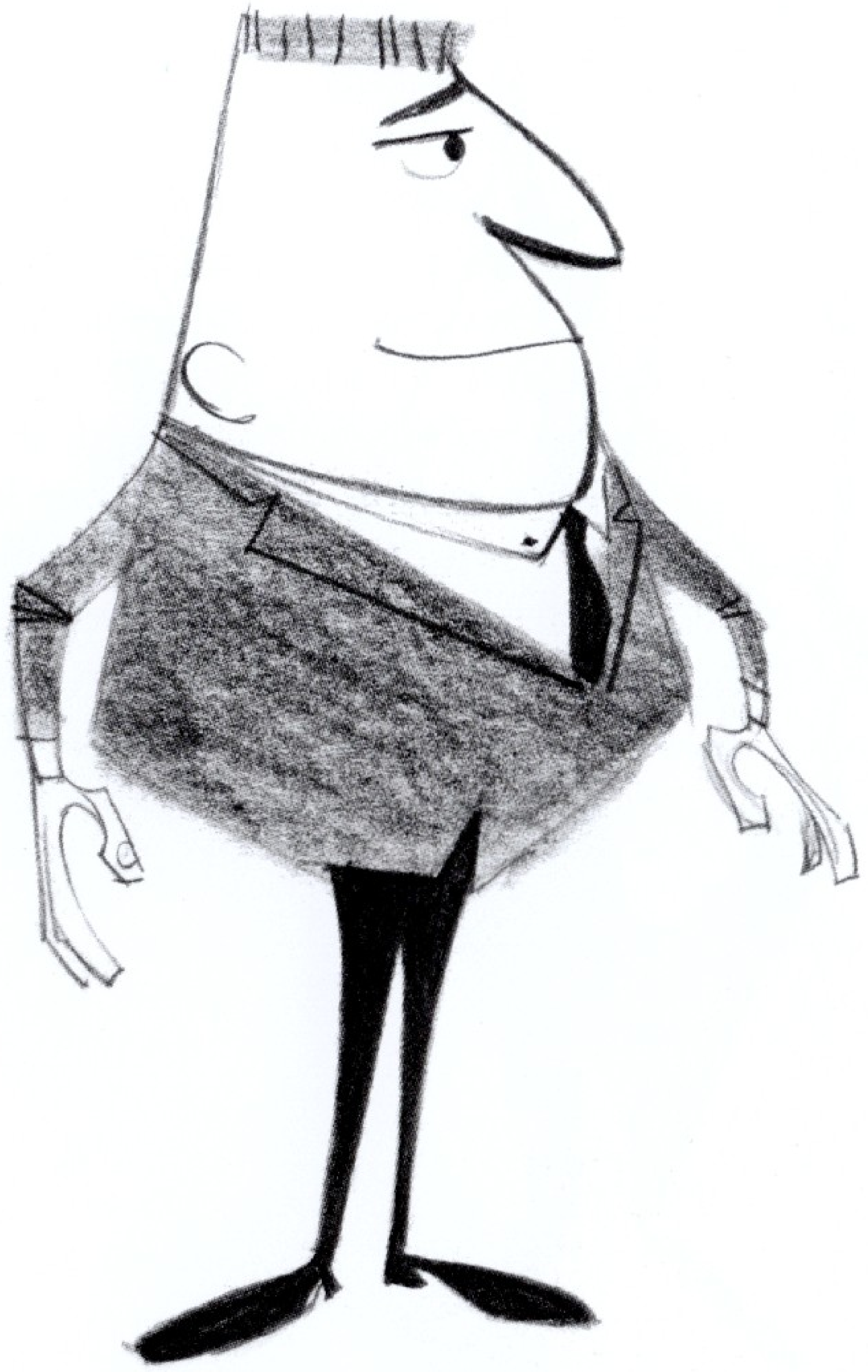
Various commercial designs
by Gene Hazelton.

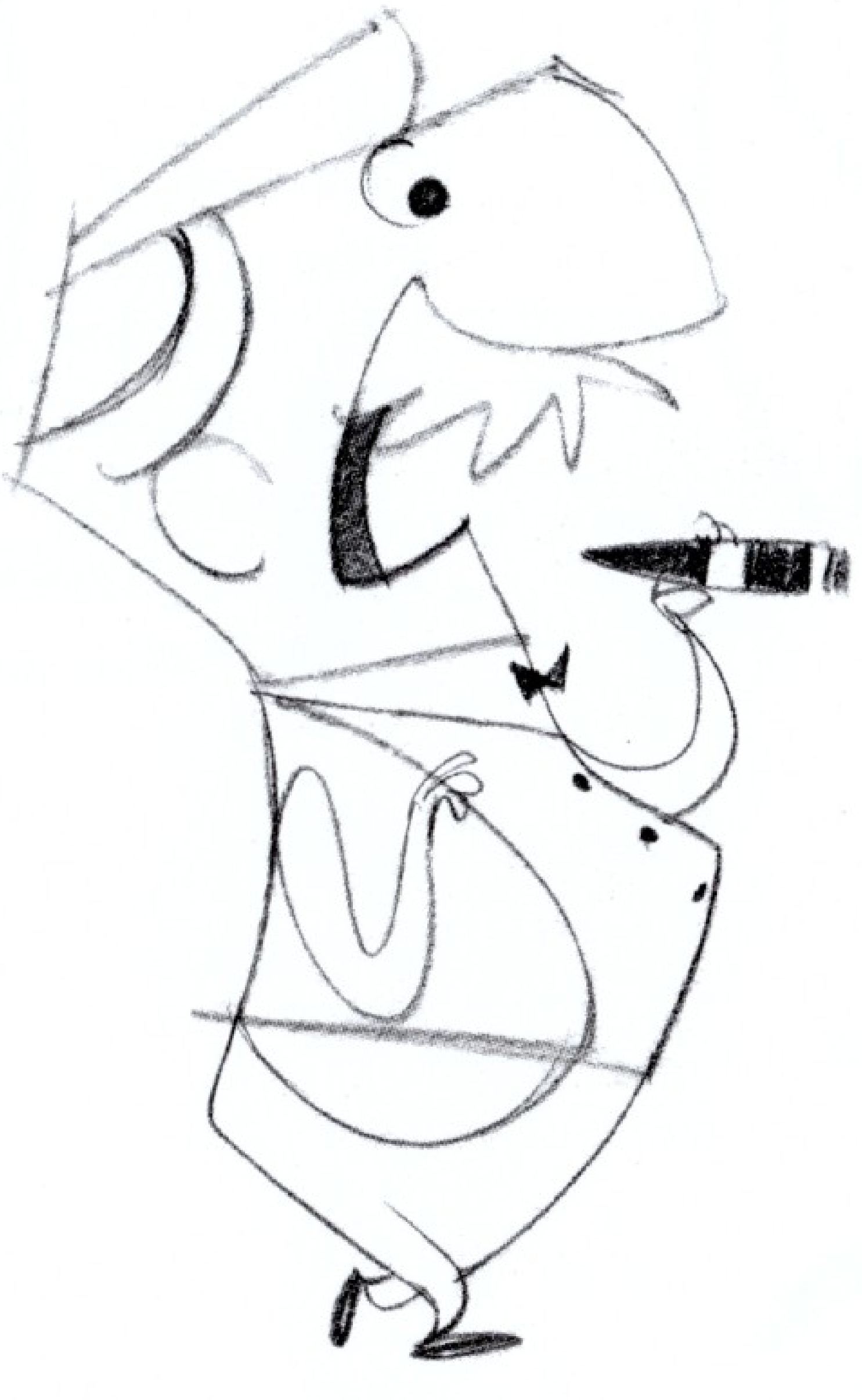


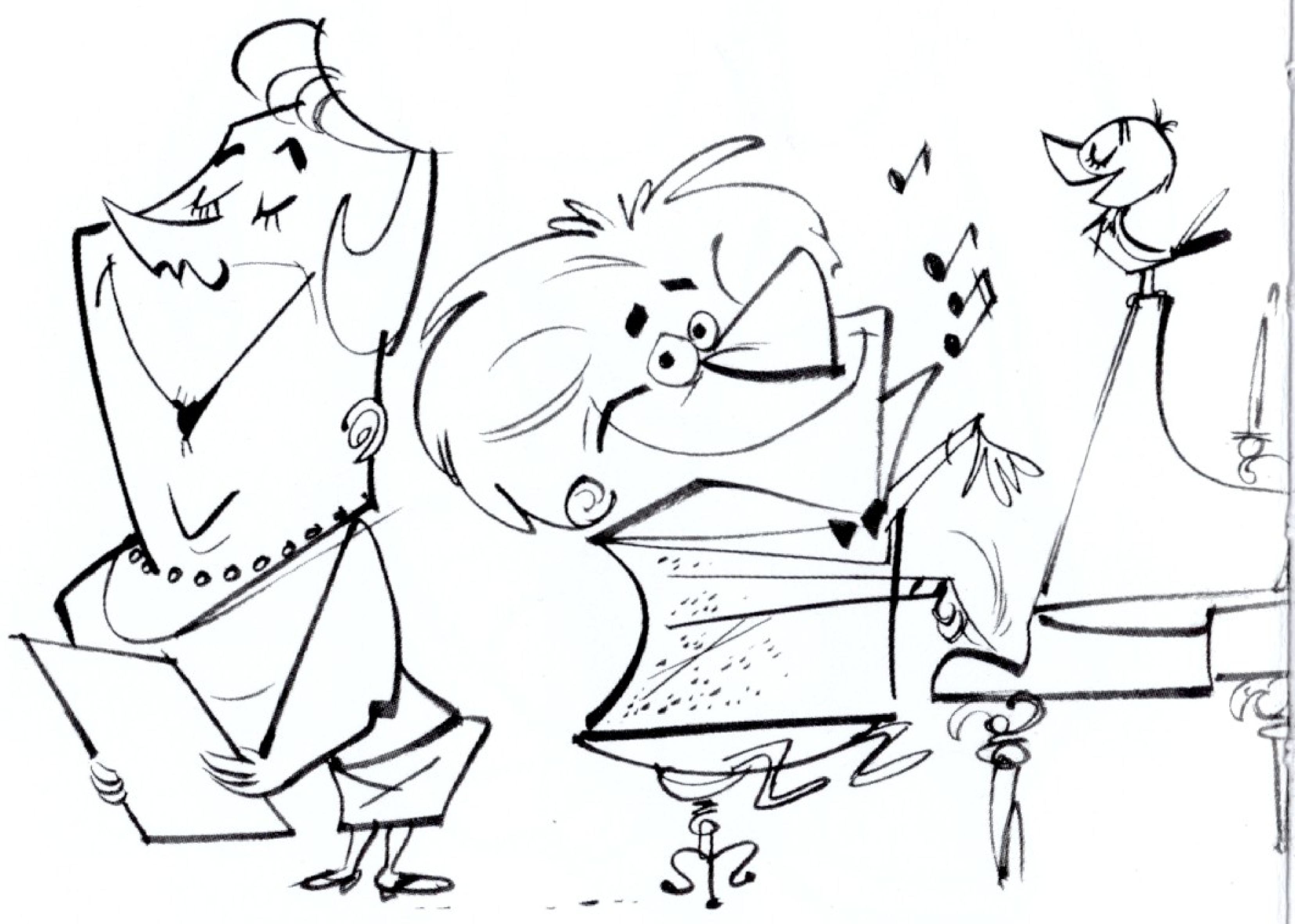

OUNTAIN OF YOUTH

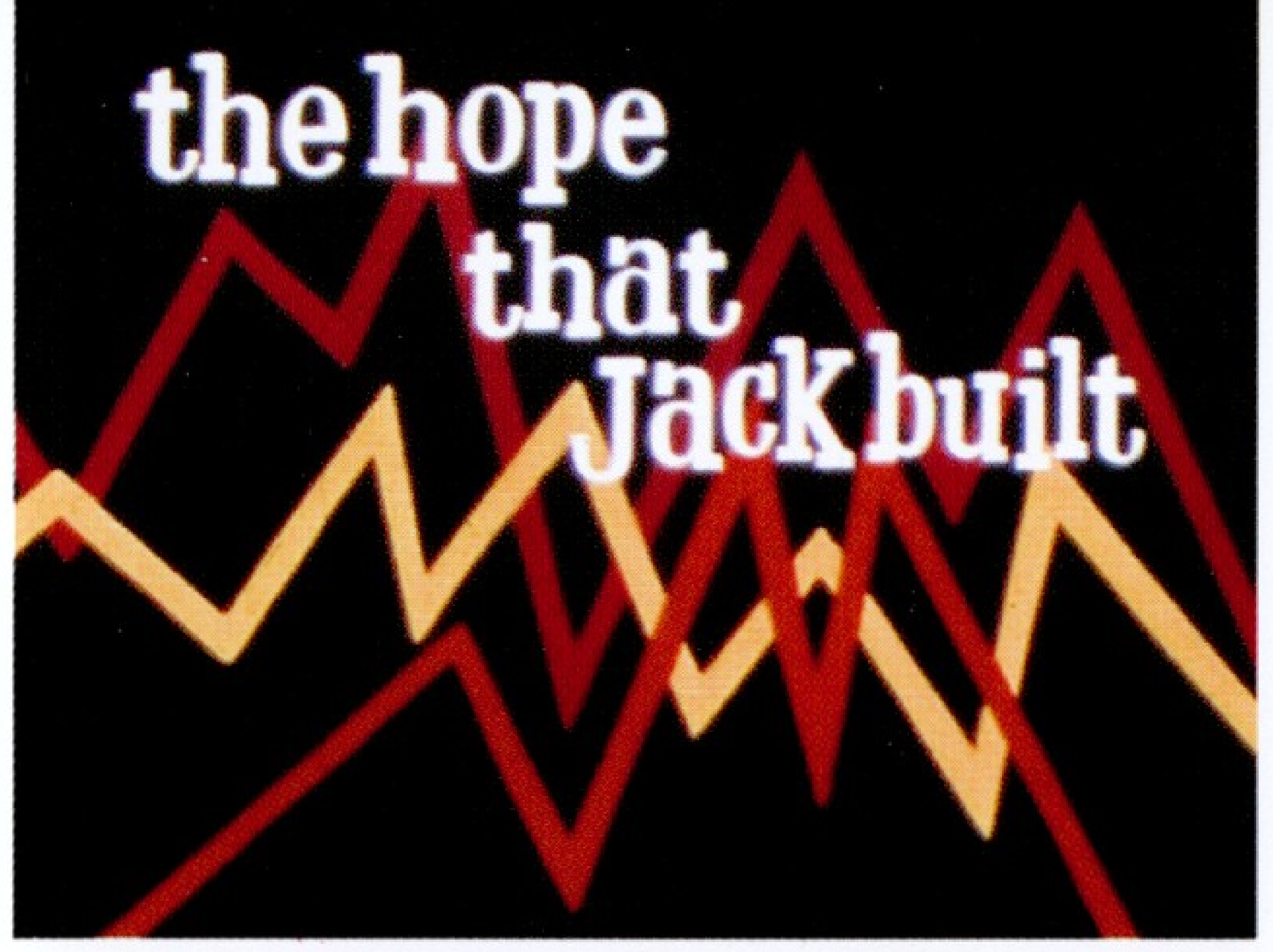
Grain Belt Beer Commercial
Storyboard panel by Gene Hazelton

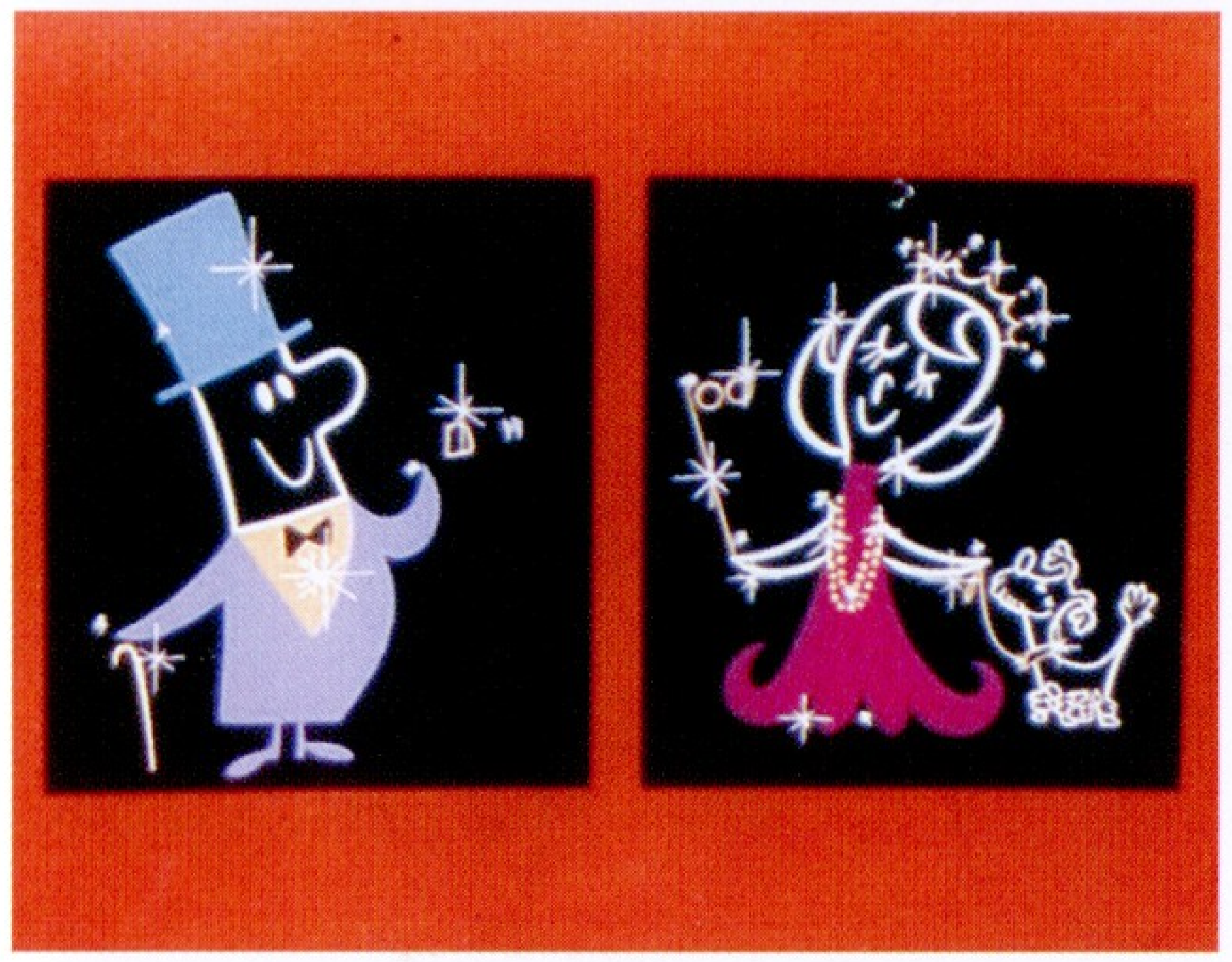


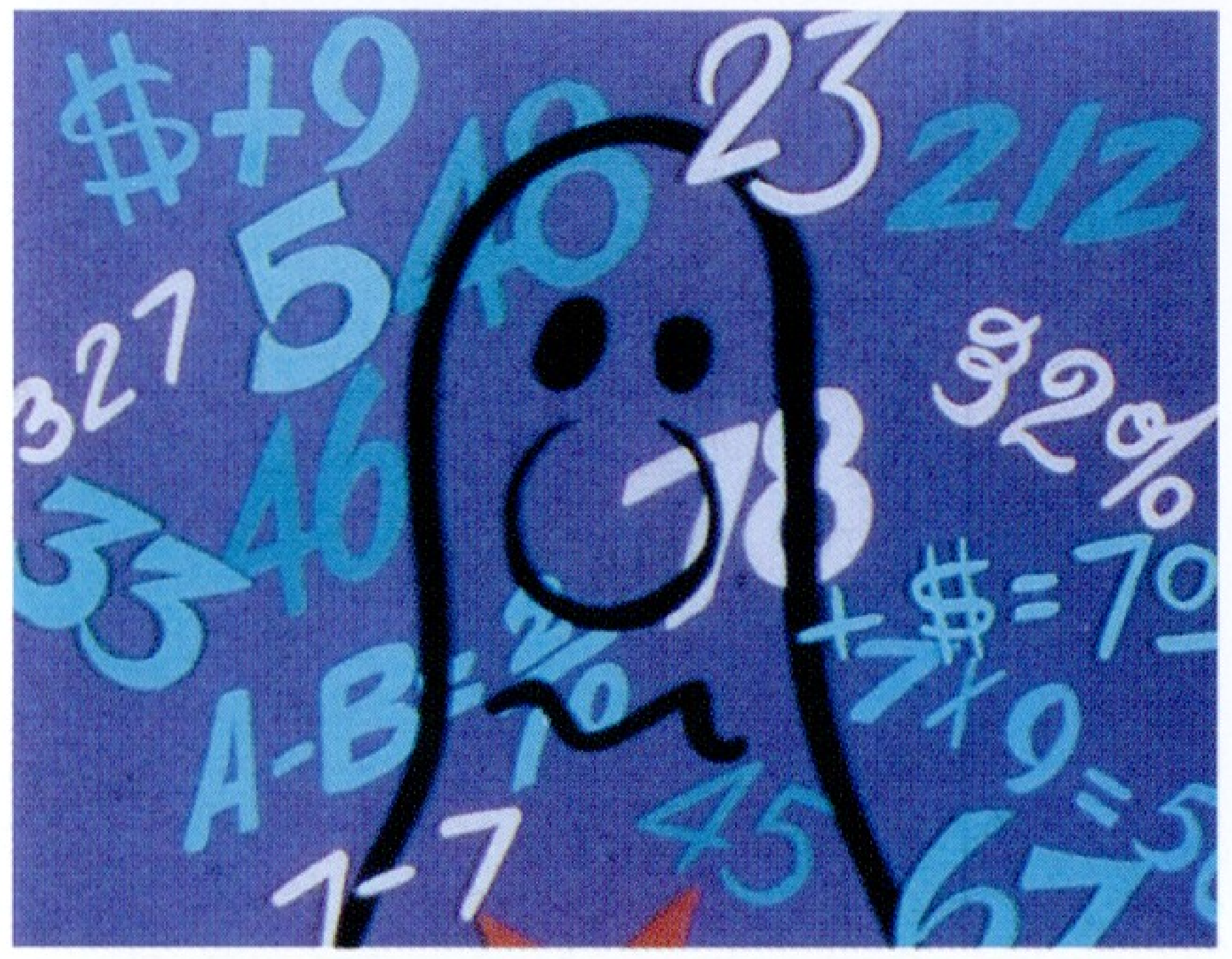


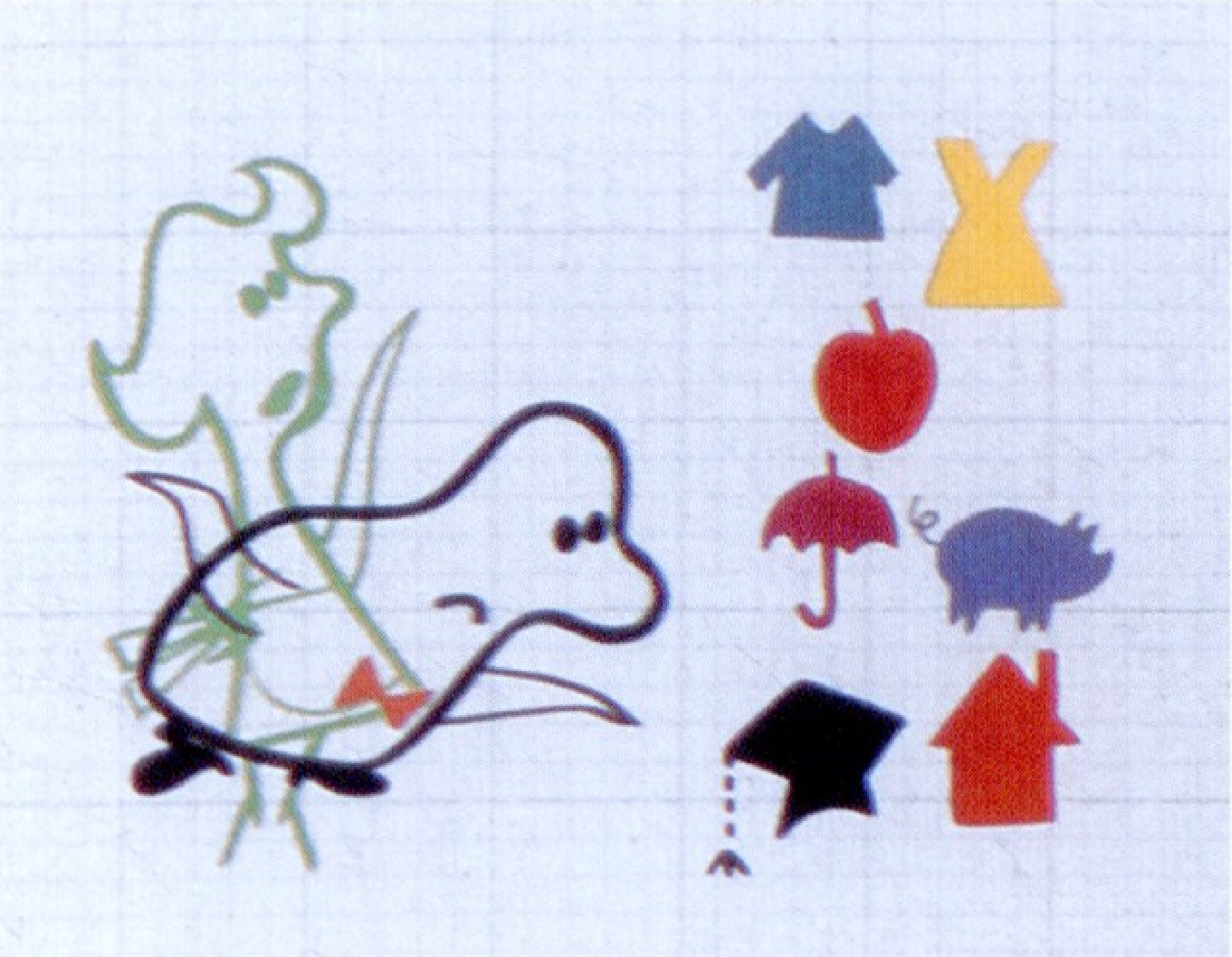


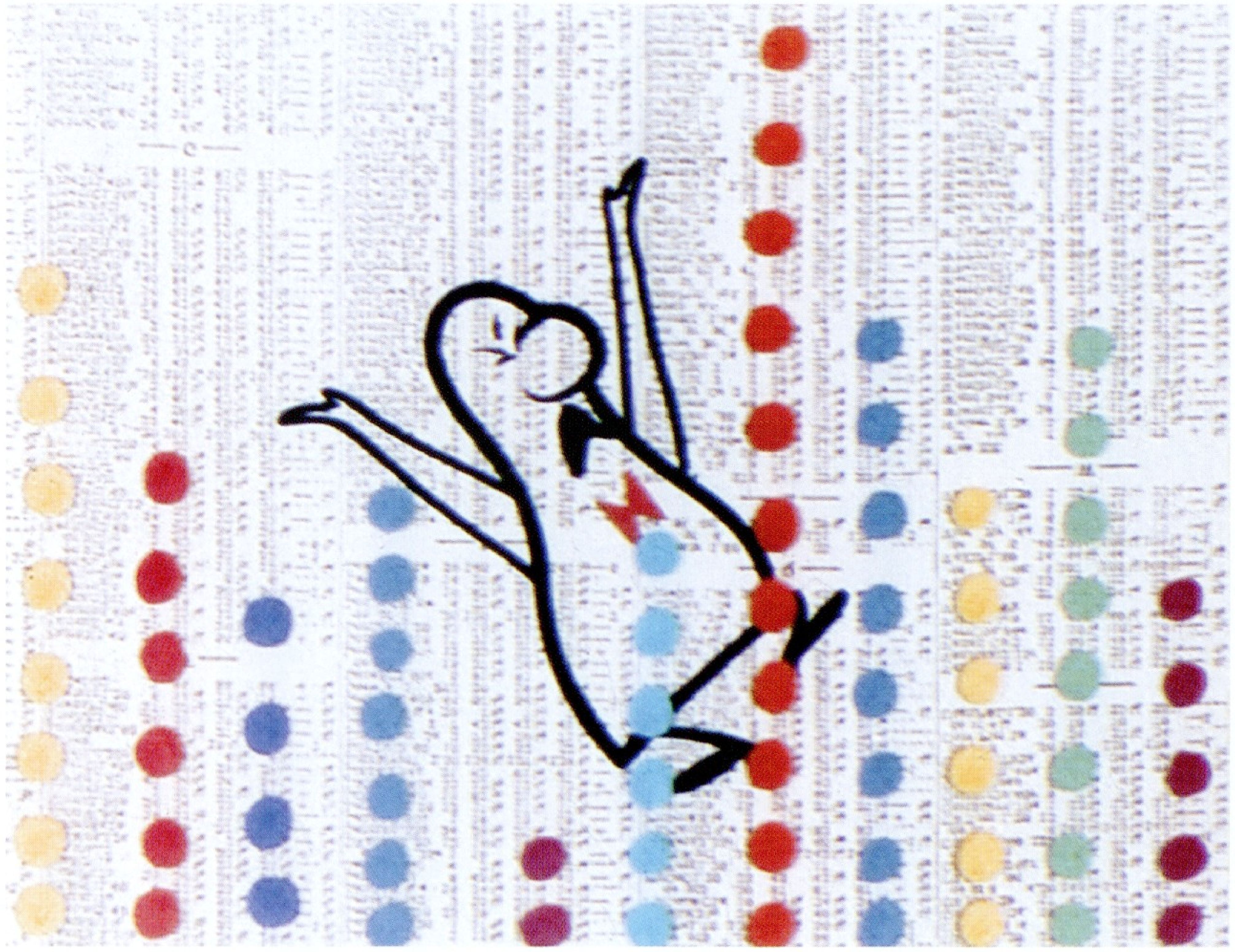



the hope that jack built



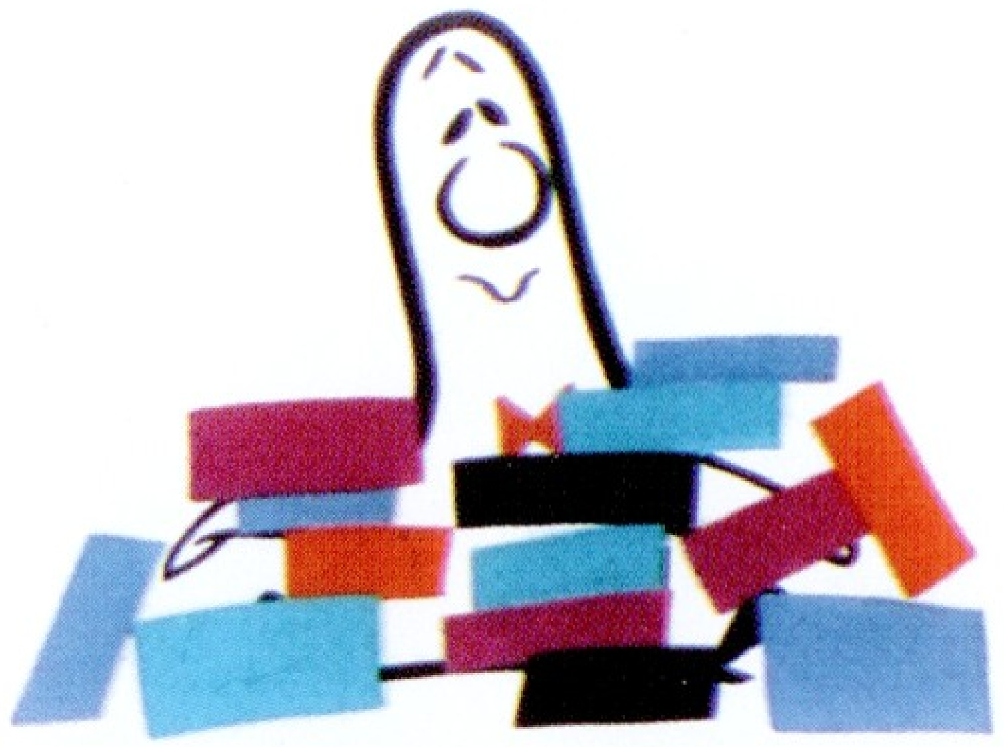


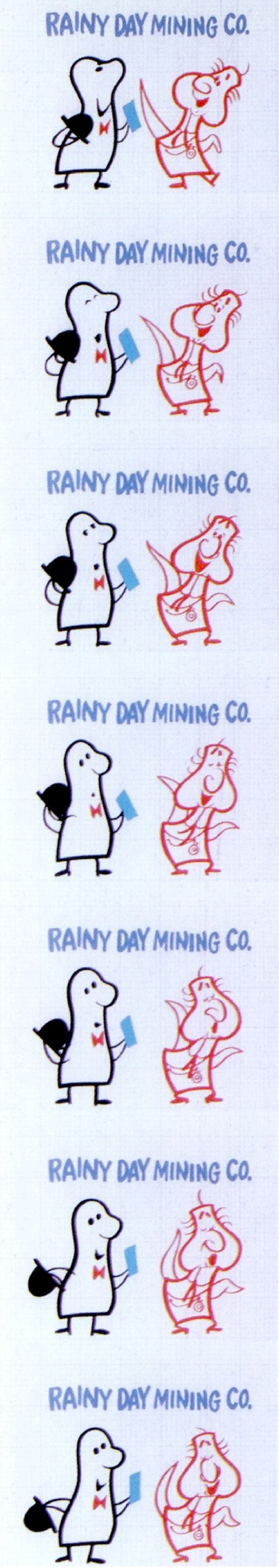




***The Hope That Jack Built* (1957)**

This film, produced for the National Association of Investment Companies, was a unique cross-country collaboration between New York City–based Robert Lawrence Productions and its West Coast commercial arm, Grantray-Lawrence Animation. The film was written in New York by Gene Deitch and Bill Bernal and designed by Cliff Roberts but animated in Los Angeles by Grantray-Lawrence Animation.




RAINY DAY MINING CO.
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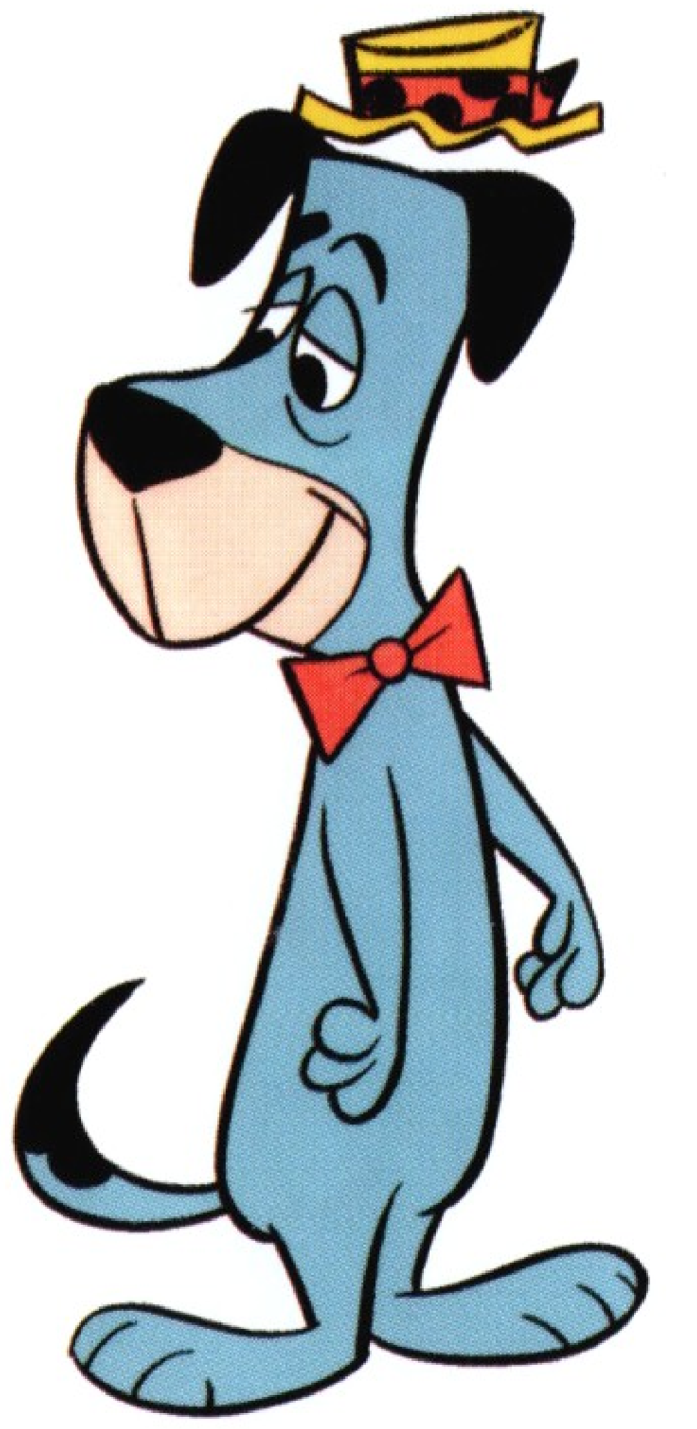
H

HANNA-BARBERA



Left: ***The Huckleberry Hound Show* (1958)**
Designer: Ed Benedict
Production cel

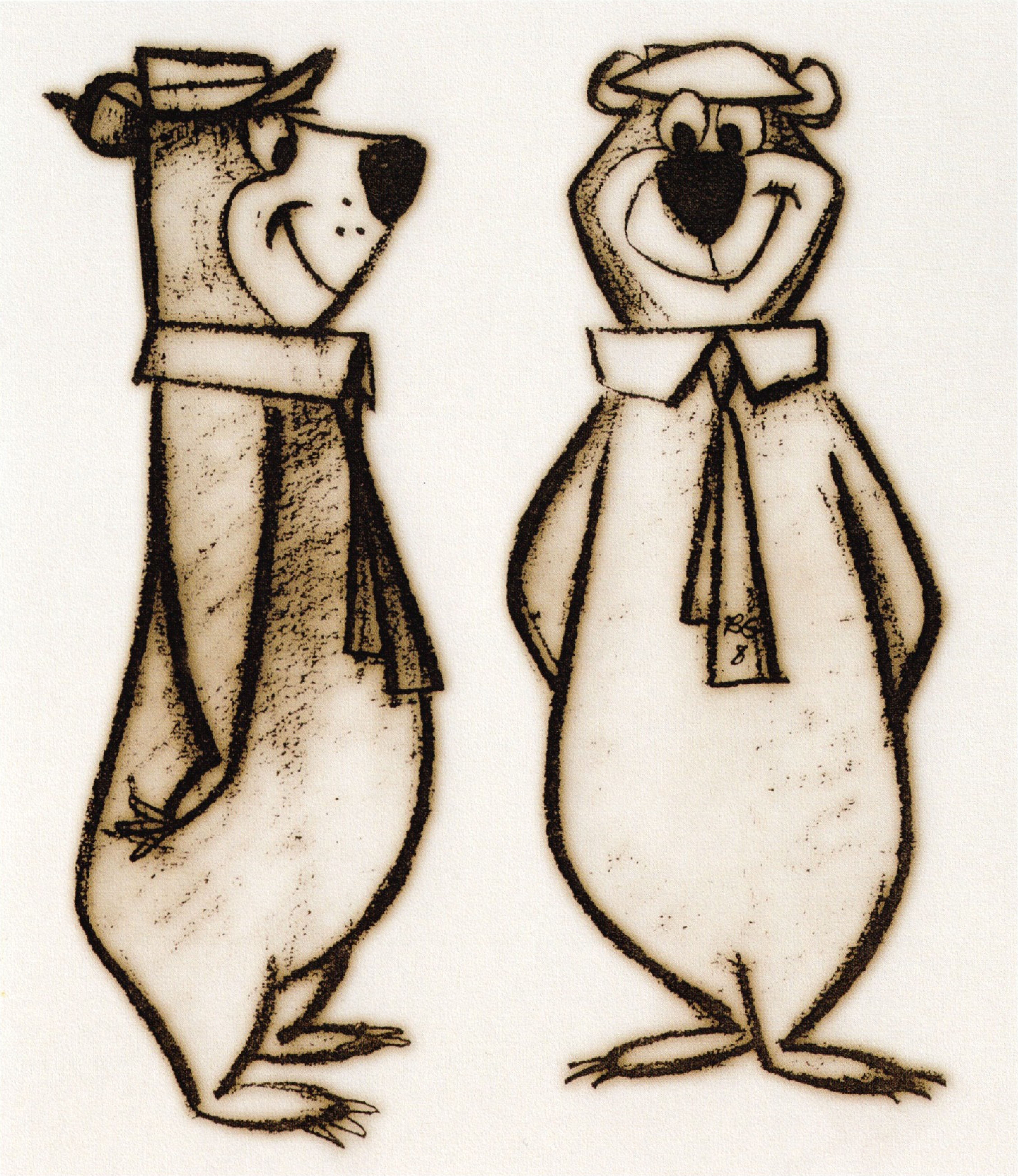
The limited budgets of early TV animation had the unintended consequence of amplifying the role of design in cartoons. If the type of full animation that had been the hallmark of American theatrical animation was no longer possible, then cartoon producers could engage audiences through colorful eye candy in the form of distinctively designed characters. Nobody understood this better than the animation team of Bill Hanna and Joe Barbera, who had directed Tom & Jerry theatrical shorts at MGM since 1940 before entering the world of television in 1957 with *The Ruff and Reddy Show*. Their early television efforts were consistently successful, almost in spite of themselves. Audiences overlooked the clumsy limited animation and generally lackluster production values while embracing the quirky graphic appeal and strong personalities of the early Hanna-Barbera characters that appeared in *The Huckleberry Hound Show* (1958), *Quick Draw McGraw* (1959), *The Flintstones* (1960), and *The Yogi Bear Show* (1961).

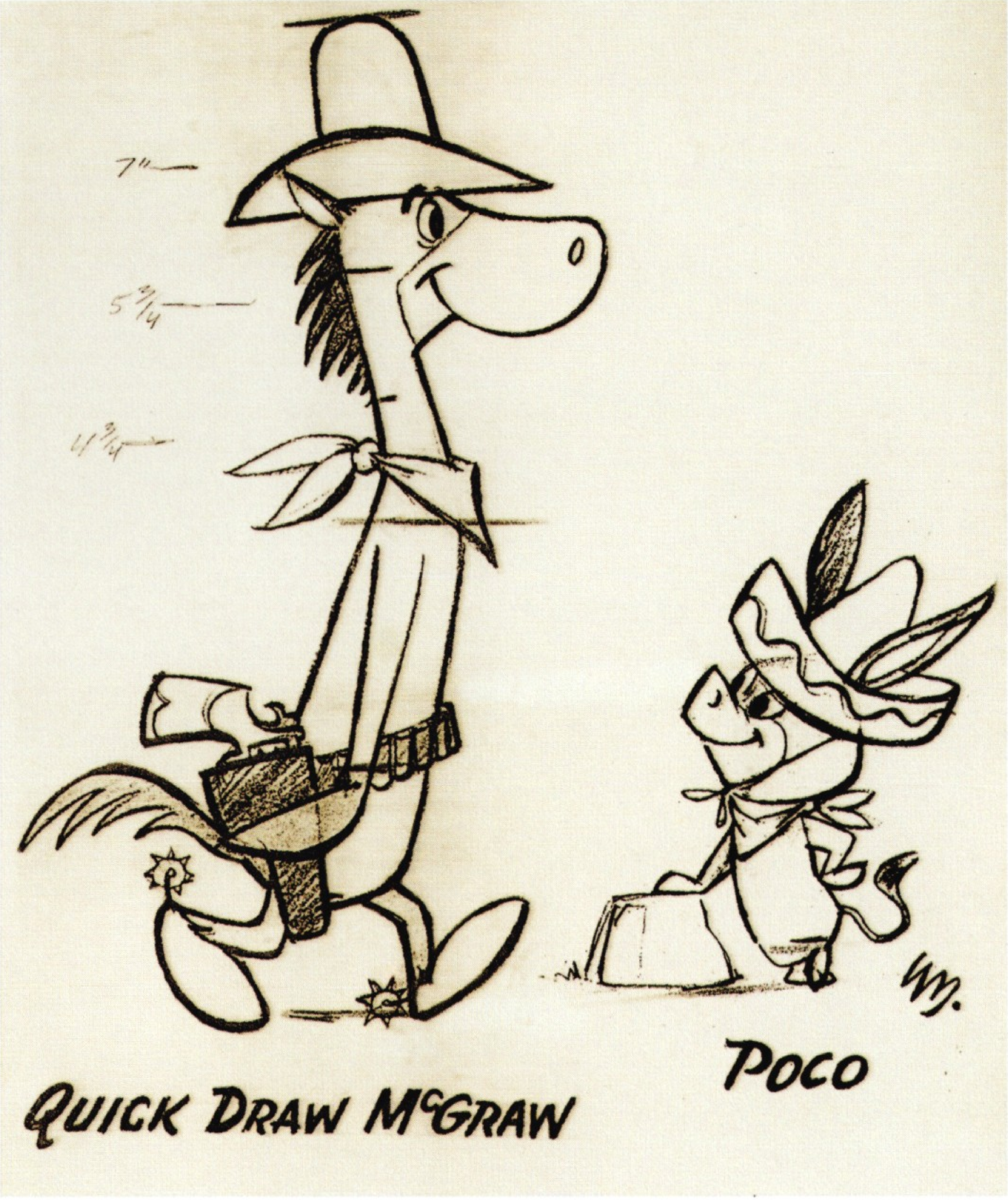
Besides their cheapness, the cartoons have another significant element in common: the characters in them were designed by Ed Benedict. In fact, most of the studio's characters through the early 1960s were designed by Benedict, who is as much responsible for defining the early Hanna-Barbera design style as any other individual. Benedict's designs are both simple—they needed to be to accommodate the strenuous demands of limited TV animation—and highly sophisticated, containing that indefinable drawing quality that gives a drawing charm and personality. *Ren & Stimpy* creator John Kricfalusi, a longtime admirer of Benedict's character designs, explains: "There's something inherently appealing about them because they're not trying to hide the fact that they're cartoons. They're glorious in their cartooniness." He elaborates:

> *What sets Ed apart from the other designers is that his work has that spark of personality. You can tell from Ed's designs what the personality of the character is. Yogi and Boo Boo, they have all the design elements that good designers will put in—the opposing angles, interesting shapes, curves versus flats, all different types of contrast in them—but on top of that, they look like different characters. Yogi is confident looking. He's kind of a big oaf himself, but a loveable oaf, and you can tell that he's mischievous. And you can totally tell from that first drawing of Boo Boo—he's got those great big pupils looking up—he looks completely innocent, like a little nebbish.*

Benedict was born in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1912 and moved with his family to Los Angeles in 1921. As a teenager, he drew newspaper comics, which appeared in the "Junior Times" supplement of the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Los Angeles Evening Herald*. His father's untimely death from pneumonia forced the young Benedict to drop out of high school in the eleventh grade and begin working to support his mother and three siblings. He found employment at a paper factory in downtown Los Angeles, which was where he ran across a sales bill for a fledgling animation studio called Walt Disney Productions. Benedict applied and was hired at Disney as an inbetweener in September 1930. In 1933, he accepted a more lucrative offer to work at the Universal cartoon studio. During the thirties, he also worked briefly at Charles Mintz Studios and attempted to start his own company, Benedict-Brewer, before returning to Disney in the 1940s to work on films like *Victory Through Air Power* (1943) and *Make Mine Music* (1946).

Though lacking formal art education, Benedict displayed an enthusiasm for art and design that exceeded the scope of the average animator of his time. His sketchbook drawings from the 1930s and 1940s show him exploring drapery and architecture as




7"
5 3/4
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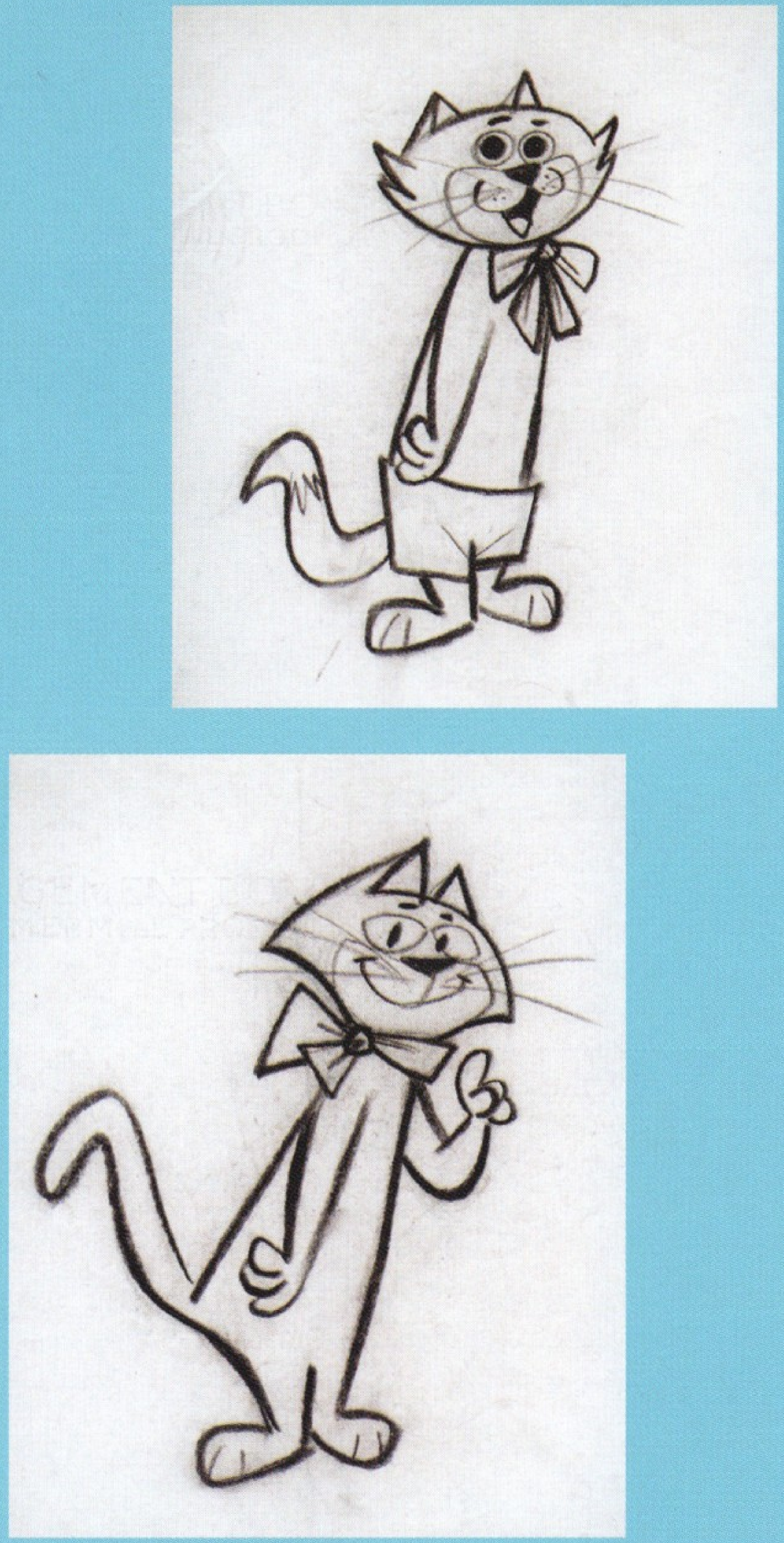
QUICK DRAW McGRAW
POCO

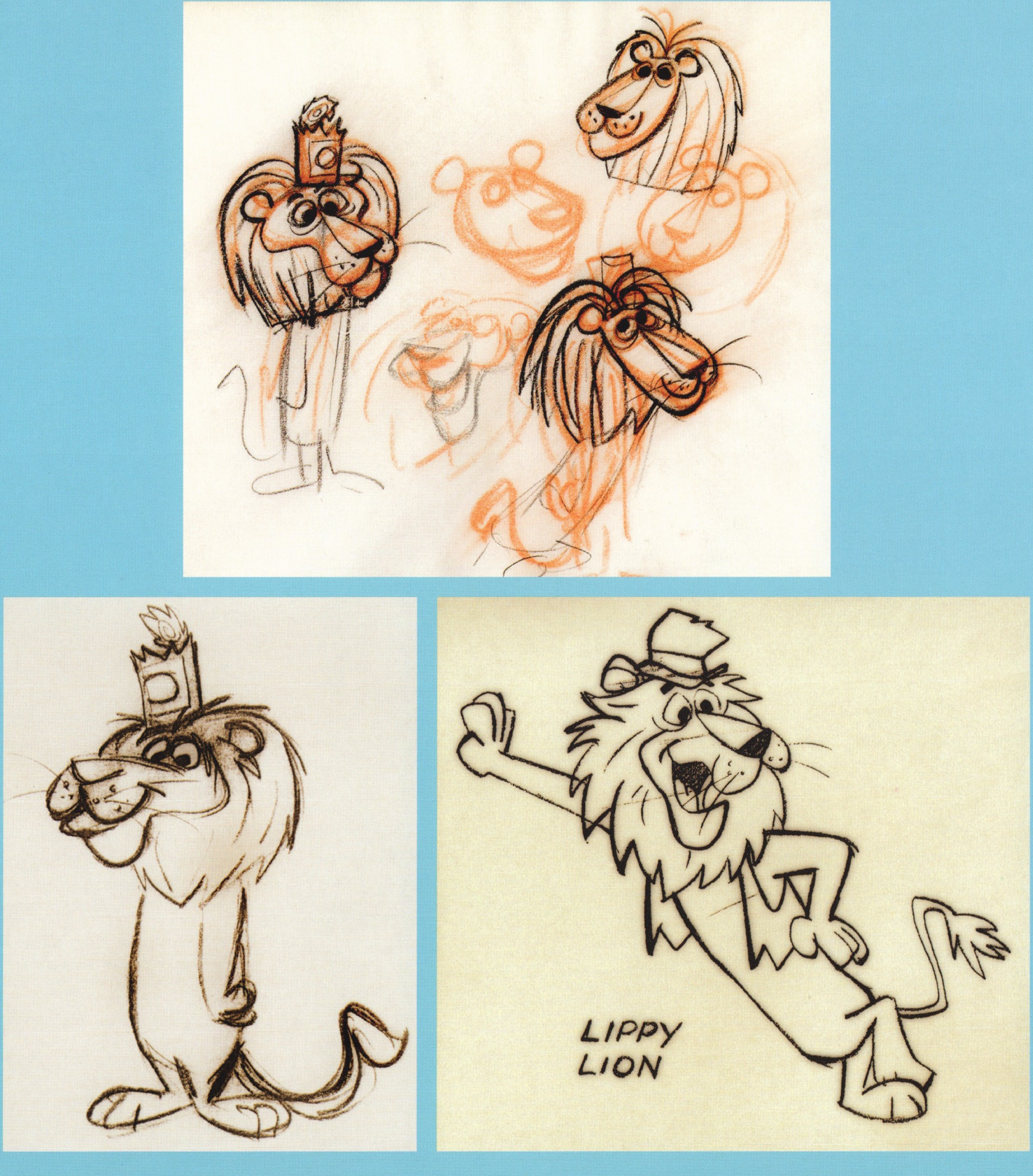
Left: ***The Huckleberry Hound Show* (1958)**
Designer: Ed Benedict
Model sheet

These early Yogi Bear concepts by Benedict show the character as he first appeared on *The Huckleberry Hound Show.*

Above: ***Quick Draw McGraw* (1959)**
Designer: Ed Benedict
Model sheet



Top and above: Hanna-Barbera designs by Ed Benedict.

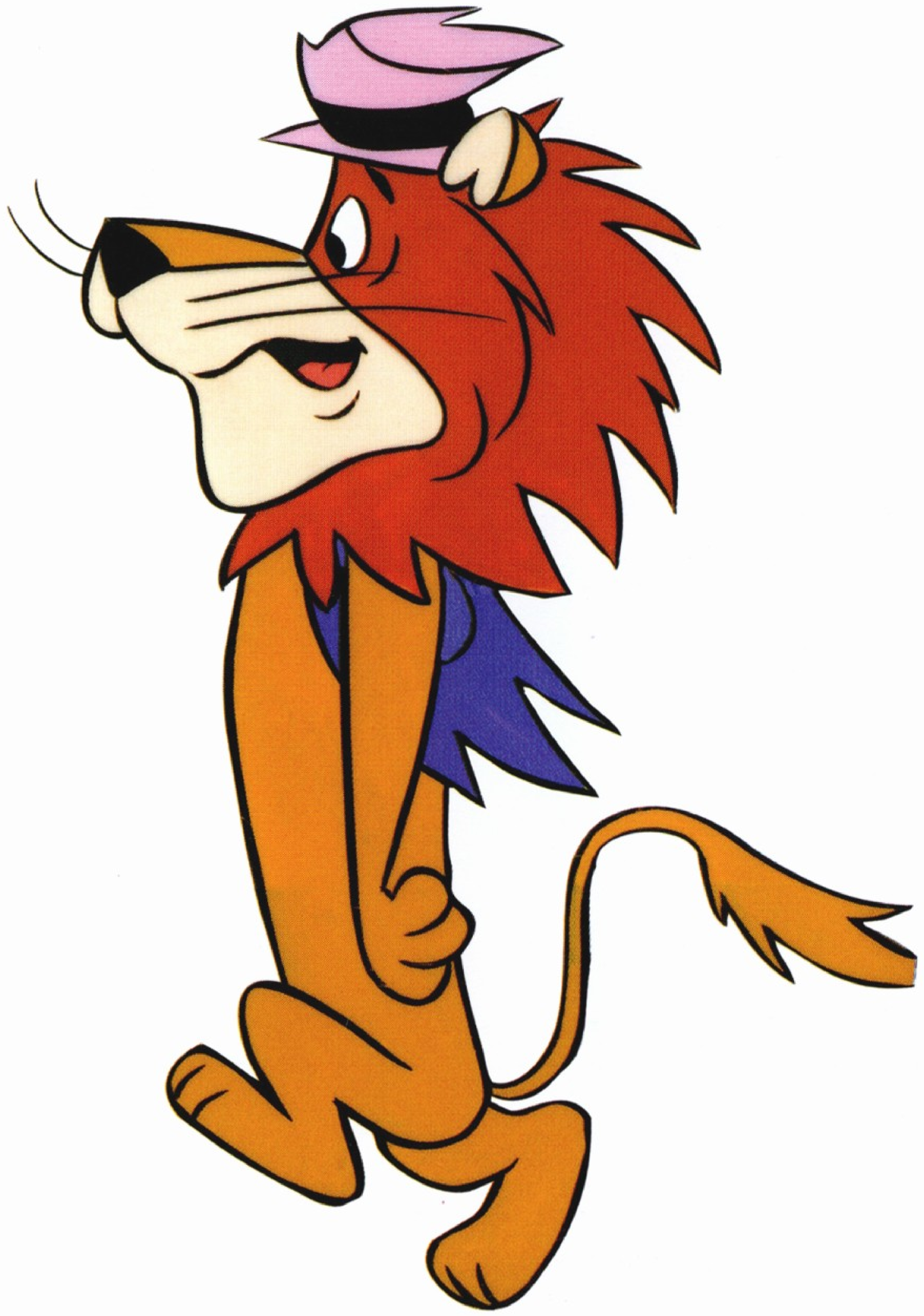


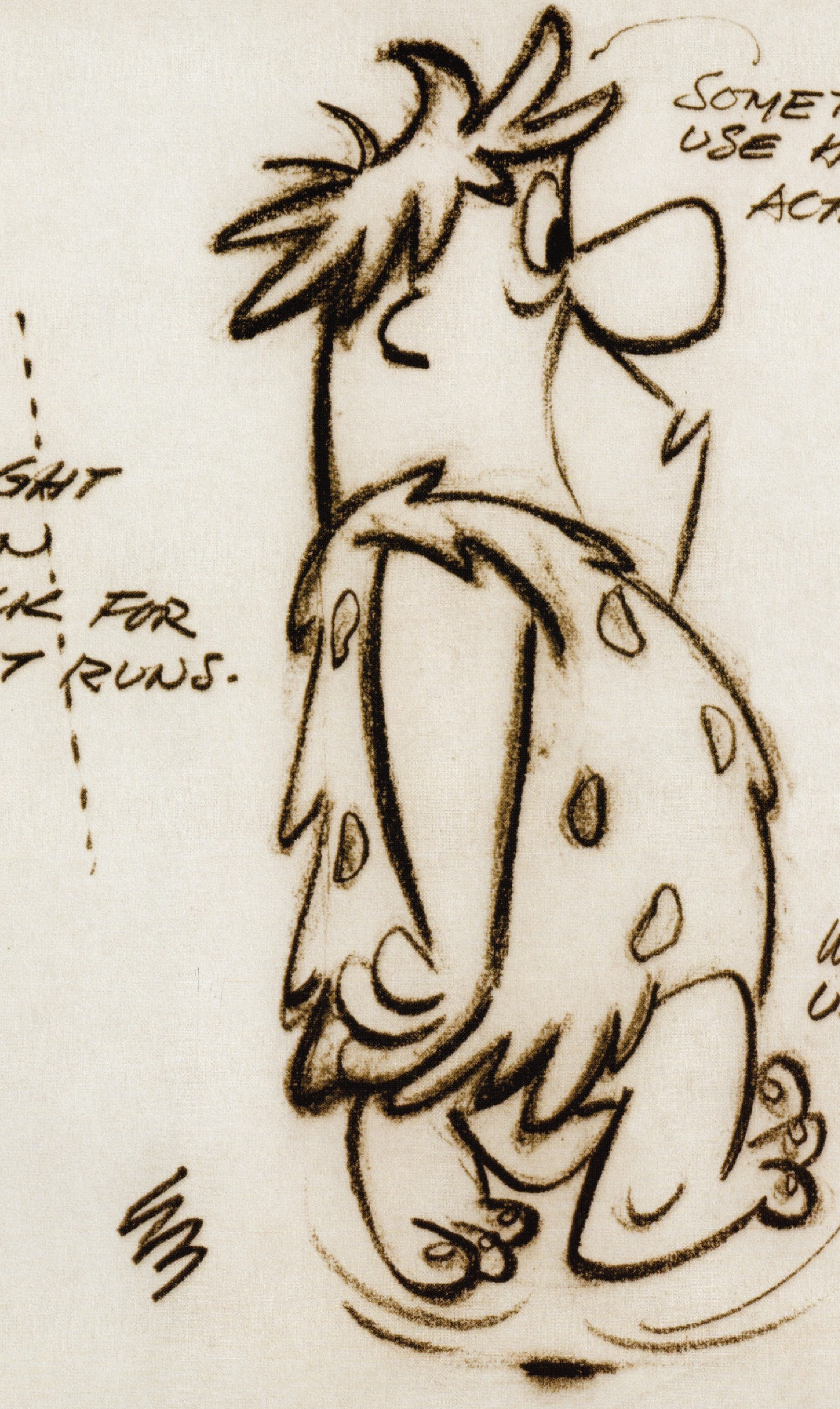
This trio of drawings by Ed Benedict illustrates how he designed his characters, beginning from the conceptual stages, where he searches for interesting graphic shapes, through the final approved character model. The final color version of Lippy the Lion that appeared on television in 1962 is on the next page.

well as a variety of cartooning styles. Two of his favorite illustrators were Russell Patterson and Roy Nelson, both of whom had developed highly inventive approaches to drawing the human figure in cartoon form. Benedict's earliest opportunity to explore modern design in a studio setting came in the mid-1940s while working as the lead designer and layout artist at the commercial studio Cartoon Films Ltd. His attempts at design were usually met with resistance by the studio owner, Paul Fennell, who preferred traditional "straight-laced drawings."

Benedict soon found a receptive party for his ambitious design ideas when former Universal colleague Tex Avery hired him at MGM in 1952. His assignment was to update the look of Avery's cartoons and give them a more modern styling. By this point, Benedict had already forged his distinctive approach to character design—an approach that effortlessly married high style and raw cartoon appeal. His designs for a short like *Deputy Droopy* (1955) exhibit many of the stylistic trademarks that would characterize his later Hanna-Barbera work. Avery continued using Benedict as one of his designers after he left MGM to direct commercials at Cascade Pictures, but by this time, Benedict's work had also attracted the attention of Bill Hanna and Joe Barbera, who were developing their first TV series while still working at MGM. "Before Bill and Joe cleared out of MGM, Bill came to my room and he told me to do a model of a dog and cat," Benedict recalls. "I don't remember whether he said it was for television or whether he said to do it in a TV style or something. I did a couple of things that weren't quite in the area of style that he was thinking of. I finally did a dog and a cat in a frozen state . . . [which] turned out to become *The Ruff and Reddy Show.*"

The majority of films discussed in this book represent a synthesis of design and animation, but Benedict's work serves as an example of how intelligent design can elevate the quality of a cartoon, even when the animation leaves much to be desired. To be fair, the early Hanna-Barbera television shows also featured superb vocal characterizations by Daws Butler and infectious theme songs by Hoyt Curtin, but it is difficult to imagine that they would have resonated with audiences had it not been for the key graphic contribution of Benedict. In interviews, Benedict routinely plays down the significance of his cartoon creations. He expresses mild amusement that his characters have lasted so long but has difficulty reconciling the fact that these weekly freelance assignments that he drew in the dining room of his Cheviot Hills home could somehow represent a pinnacle of early TV animation design. "There's a lot of people who create a lot of things that are great but they're in a folder or drawer somewhere, and in this case these may have gone into a file too," Benedict explains. "The only thing is that Hanna-Barbera took and sold the thing. It's because of them that it is well known. And to some extent, in an extremely minute microscopic way my name might be known. . . . And I think nothing of it, sincerely and truthfully."

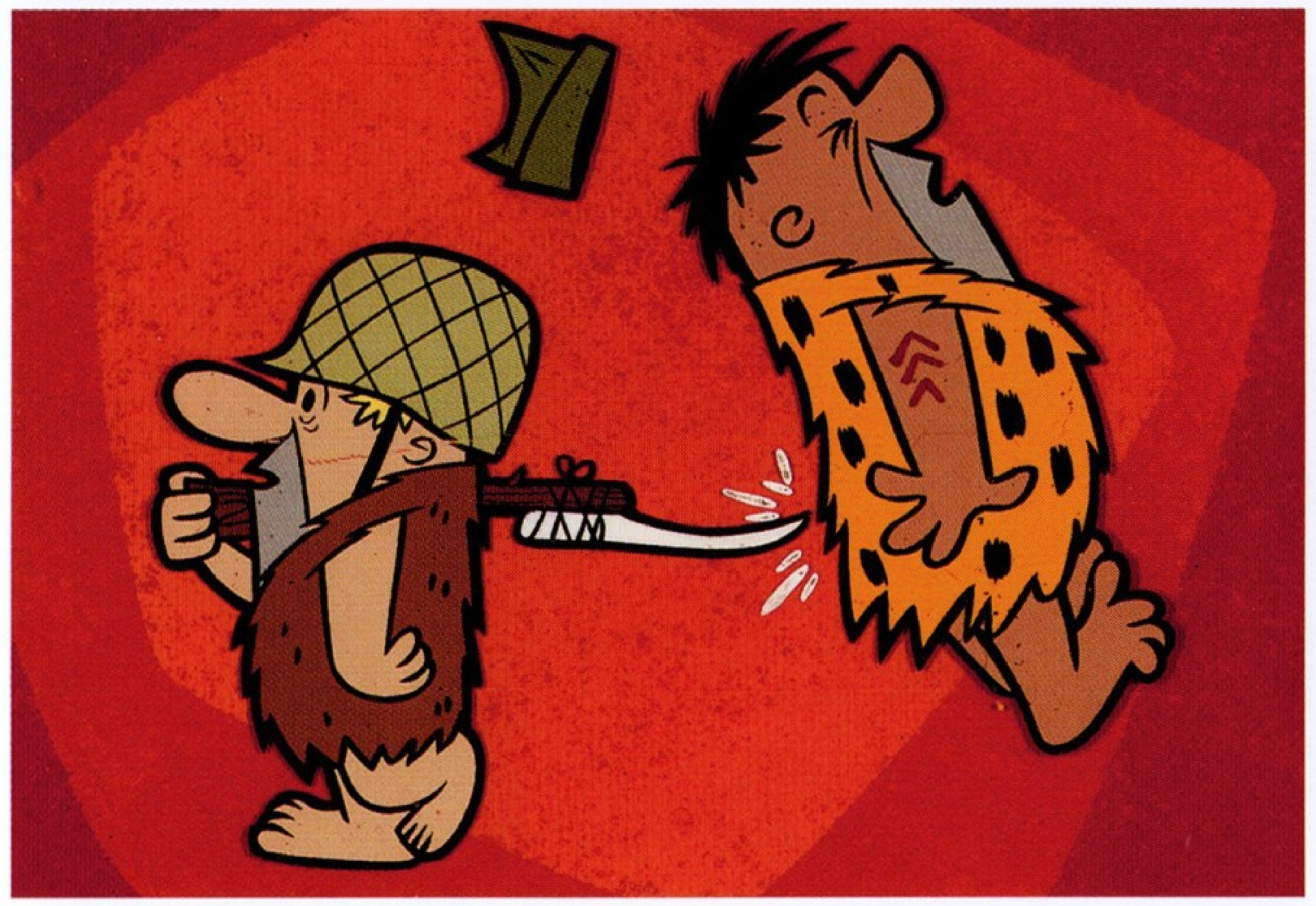




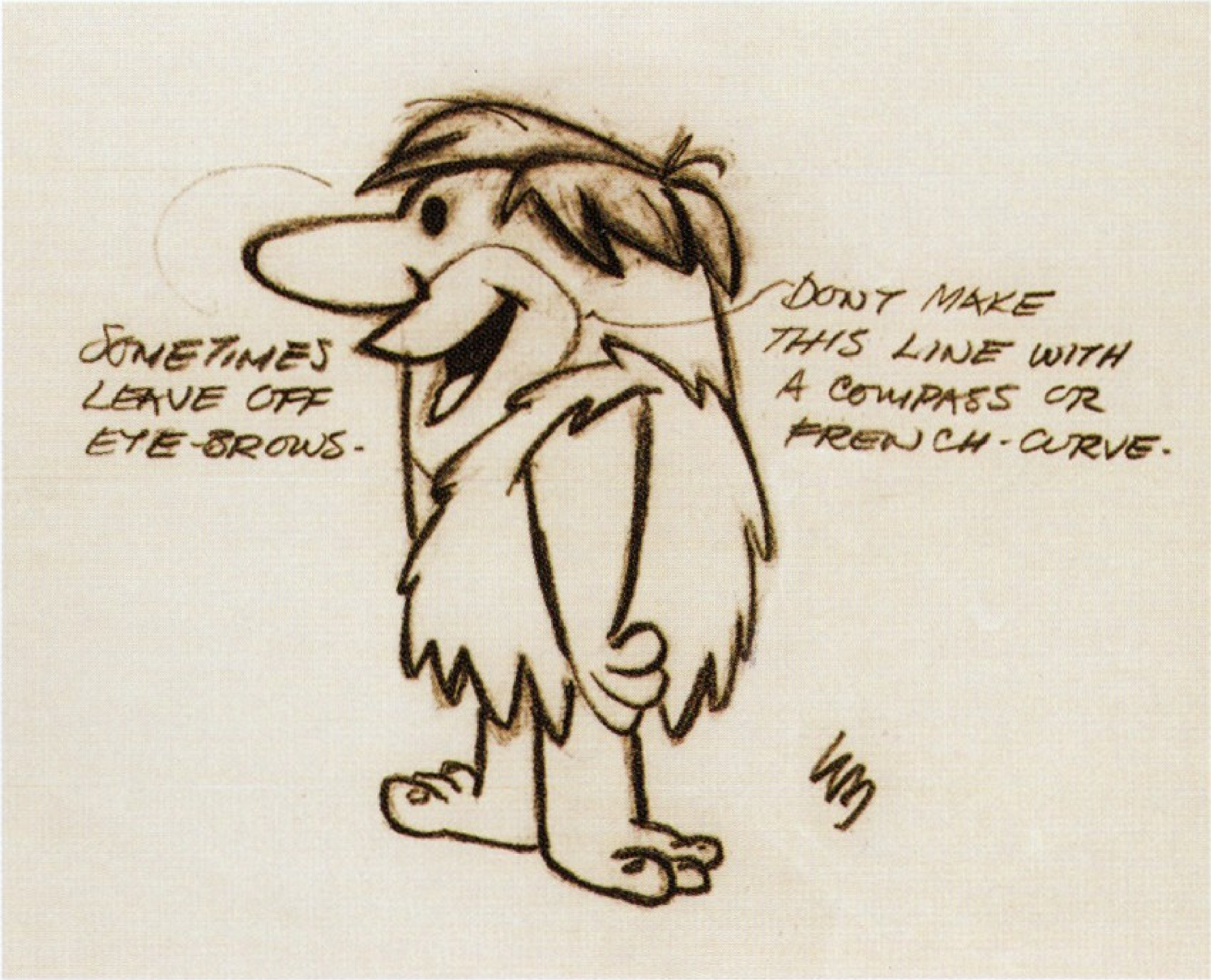
SOMETIMES -
USE HAIR FOR
ACTION -

SLIGHT
LEAN
BACK FOR
MOST RUNS.

WHEN POSSIBLE.
USE A NEARLY
STRAIGHT LINE
TO RELIEVE A
CURVED LINE -
AS ON LEGS, ARMS -



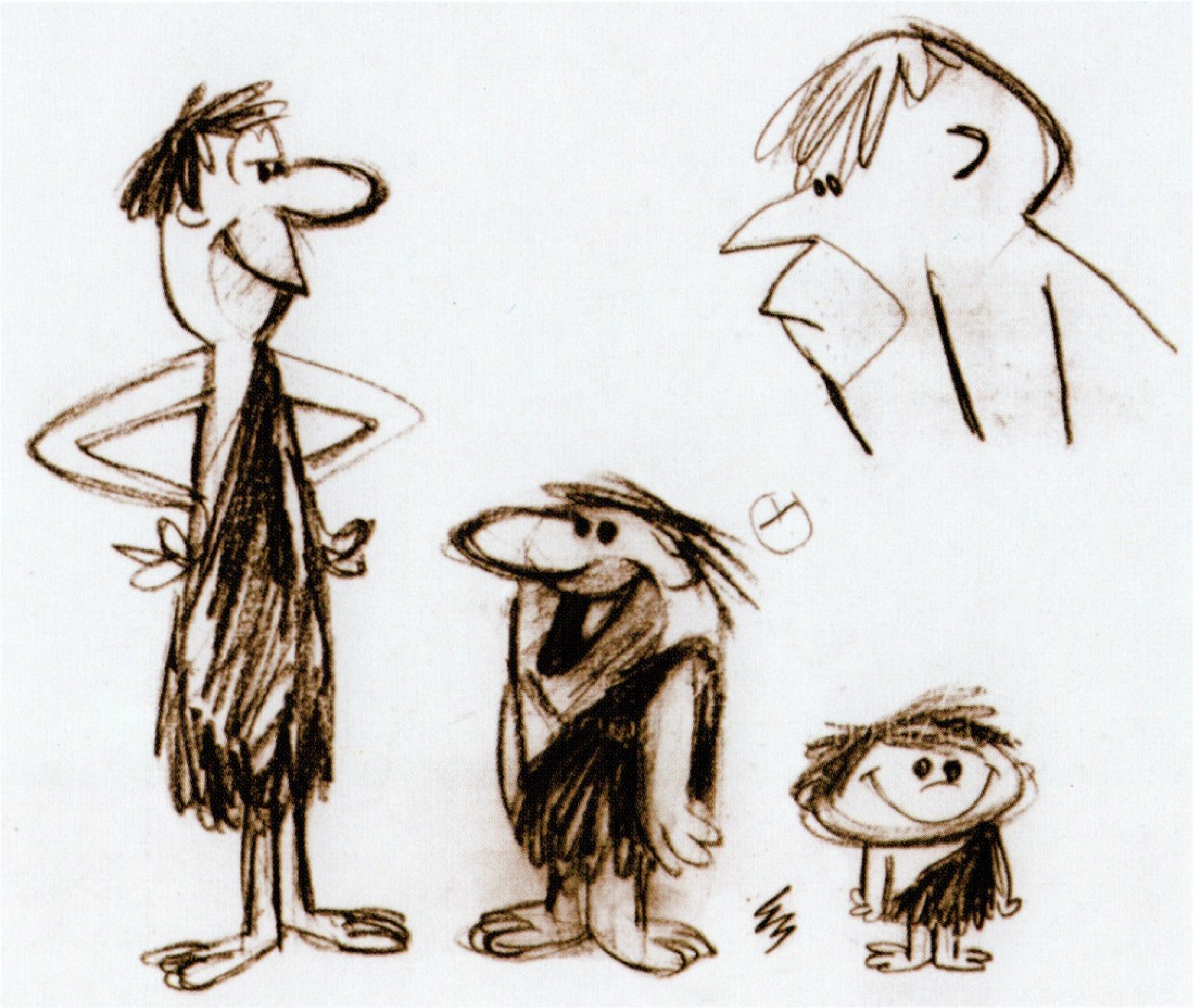
An early piece of *Flintstones* network presentation art, drawn by Dan Gordon based on designs by Ed Benedict.


SOMETIMES LEAVE OFF EYE-BROWS.
DON'T MAKE THIS LINE WITH A COMPASS OR FRENCH-CURVE.

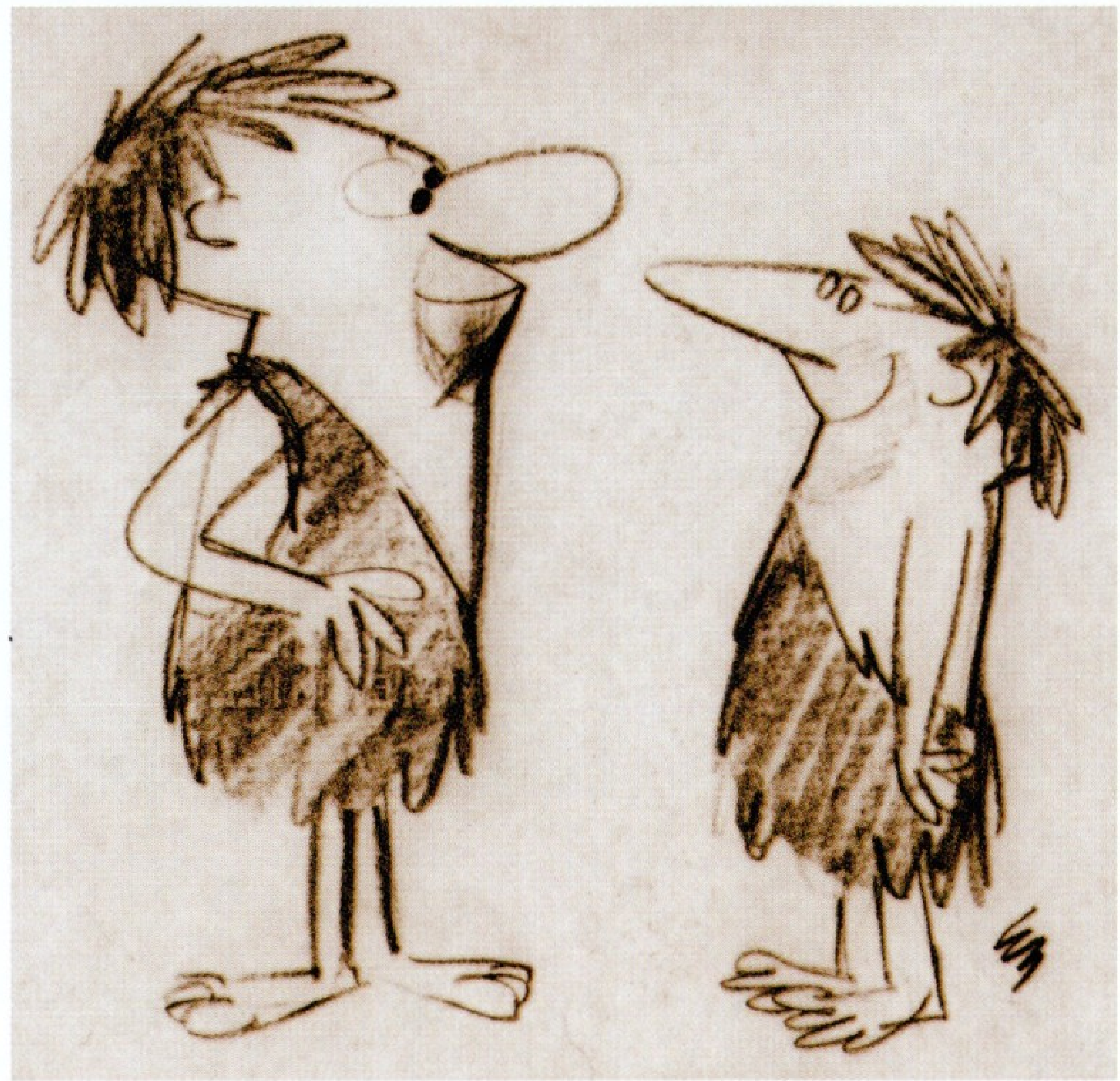
Above: Early Barney Rubble model drawing by Ed Benedict.

The Flintstones

In late 1959, Ed Benedict received an unlikely freelance assignment from Hanna-Barbera: he was asked to design a family of cavemen. Benedict had designed cavemen once before, for the Tex Avery short *The First Bad Man* (1955), but this new group of cavemen (and -women) would be far better remembered. The characters would become *The Flintstones*, the first-ever prime-time animated TV series, debuting on ABC in fall 1960. Benedict not only designed the show's now-iconic lead characters—Fred, Wilma, Barney, and Betty—but he also created countless incidental characters, props and gadgets, and background environments for the early seasons of the series, almost single-handedly establishing the look and feel of prehistoric Bedrock. Budgets and time constraints rarely allowed for Benedict's Hanna-Barbera designs to be brought to life with the thought and care they deserved, and *The Flintstones* was no exception. In this instance, however, the strength of the show's concept transcended the lame animated execution, and the series went on to become a classic of TV animation.



Proto-*Flintstones* concepts by Ed Benedict.



Opposite: Early Fred Flintstone model drawing by Ed Benedict.

J

JOHN SUTHERLAND
PRODUCTIONS

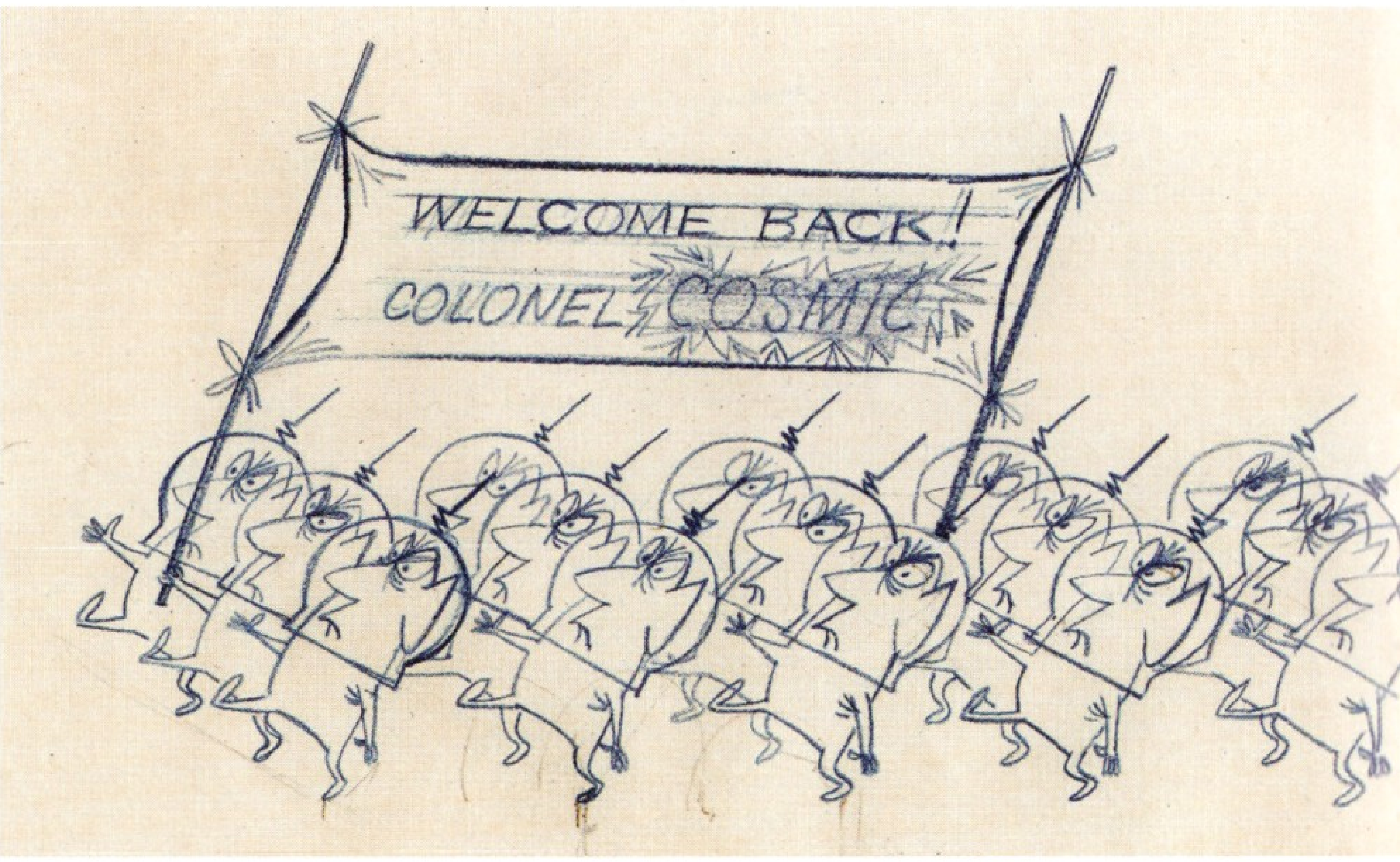
John Sutherland Productions was the preferred animation studio for the deep-pocketed giants of American industry. Its clients included U.S. Steel, General Electric, American Petroleum Institute, Kaiser Aluminum and Chemical Corporation, DuPont, Union Carbide, and the New York Stock Exchange. In the words of Sutherland scriptwriter Bill Scott, they were making films for "some of the greatest wheelers and dealers and corporate pirates, as yet unhung, that I've ever met." He ruefully added, "Everything I'd thought or suspected about big business turned out to be absolutely true."

The company's namesake, John Sutherland (1910–2001), graduated from UCLA in 1937 with a degree in politics and economics, gaining animation experience as a writer on Disney's *Bambi* and as a writer-producer for military training films during World War II, before opening his own outfit in 1945. John Sutherland started by producing the Daffy Ditties entertainment shorts for United Artists, but he soon discovered the more lucrative field of industrial and corporate films.

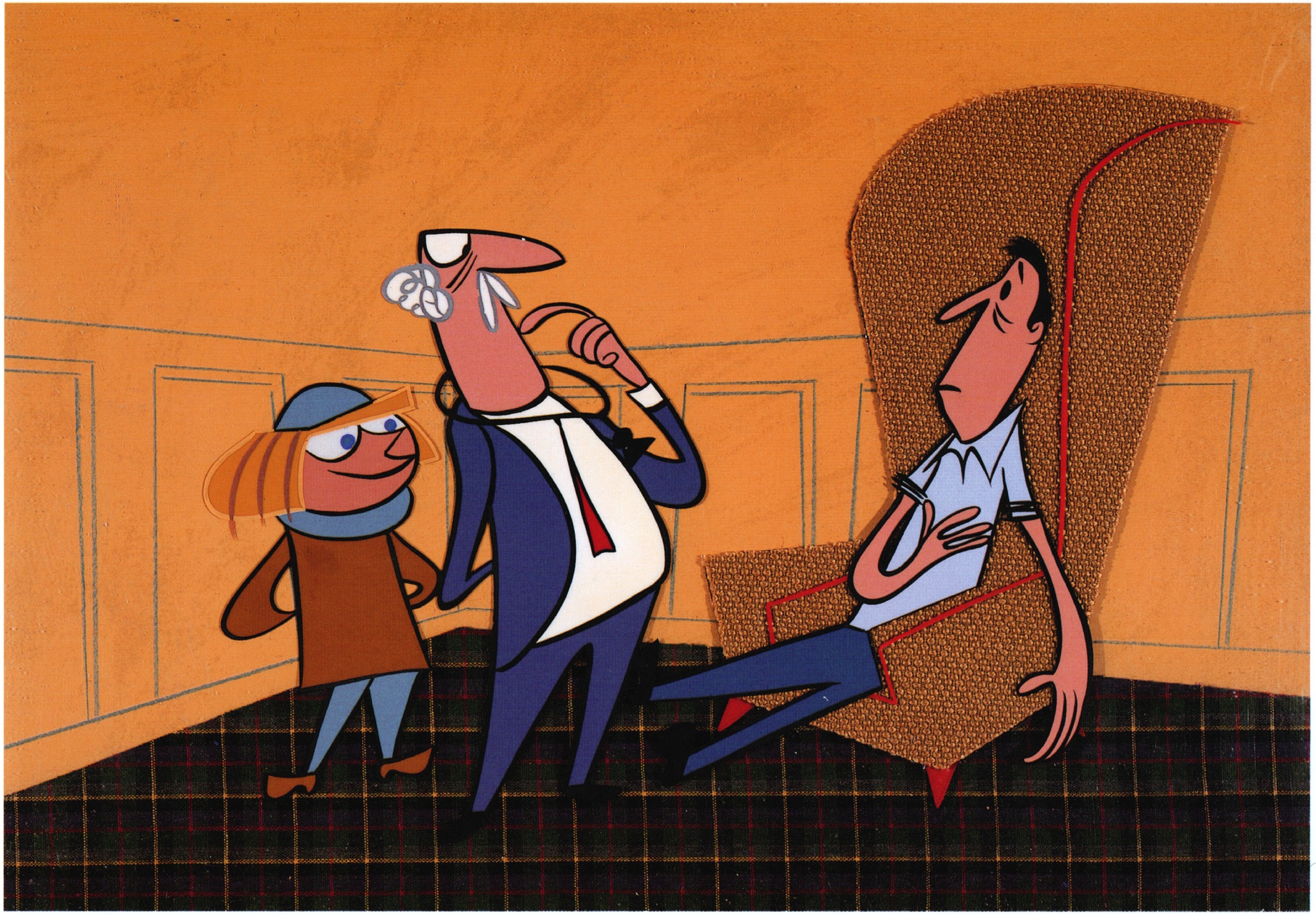
The Sutherland films, rarely seen nowadays because of their dated content, rank among the most visually satisfying industrial films produced during the 1950s. The studio had little difficulty attracting top design and animation talent by offering some of the most generous salaries in the industry. Bill Melendez, a top-rank animator, was pulling in $125 a week at UPA in the early 1950s; his pay doubled to $250 a week after joining Sutherland. Scott recalled: "I disliked what I was writing, but I wrote it because the money was good. About once a year, I'd get fed up and march into the office to say I couldn't do it anymore. Every time I'd open my mouth to complain, they'd stuff it with money."

Sutherland generally kept his distance from the design and animation process, preferring to focus his attention on the story and script. Eyvind Earle spoke to the level of freedom he had when he was working at the studio: "I was the absolute boss. I never had to check with anybody or show what I had done to get it approved." As a result of this lax supervision, each of the Sutherland films has its own distinctive look depending on the layout artist or art director who worked on it. Dozens of elegantly styled films emerged from Sutherland's studio during the 1950s: *The Littlest Giant* (1955) and *Destination Earth* (1956) were jointly designed by Tom Oreb and Victor Haboush (b. 1924), *It's Everybody's Business* (1954) featured Maurice Noble's styling, and *Working Dollars* (1956) had layouts and character design by Bernard Gruver (1923–1985).

Sutherland's most ambitious undertaking of the decade was *Rhapsody of Steel* (1959), a twenty-three-minute epic sponsored by U.S. Steel with an ostentatious message proclaiming "The progress of man . . . is the progress of steel." The film was reputed to be the most expensive industrial film produced up to that time ($350,000), and its budget allowed for extravagances like a lush film score composed by Dimitri Tiomkin and recorded by the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. Sutherland hired Eyvind Earle, fresh from his work on Disney's *Sleeping Beauty*, to art direct the film. Earle's ultradetailed paintings were the perfect match for the bombastic tone of the film. The crew of layout and background artists consisted of other notable talents like Maurice Noble, Victor Haboush, Tony Rivera, and Frank Armitage.

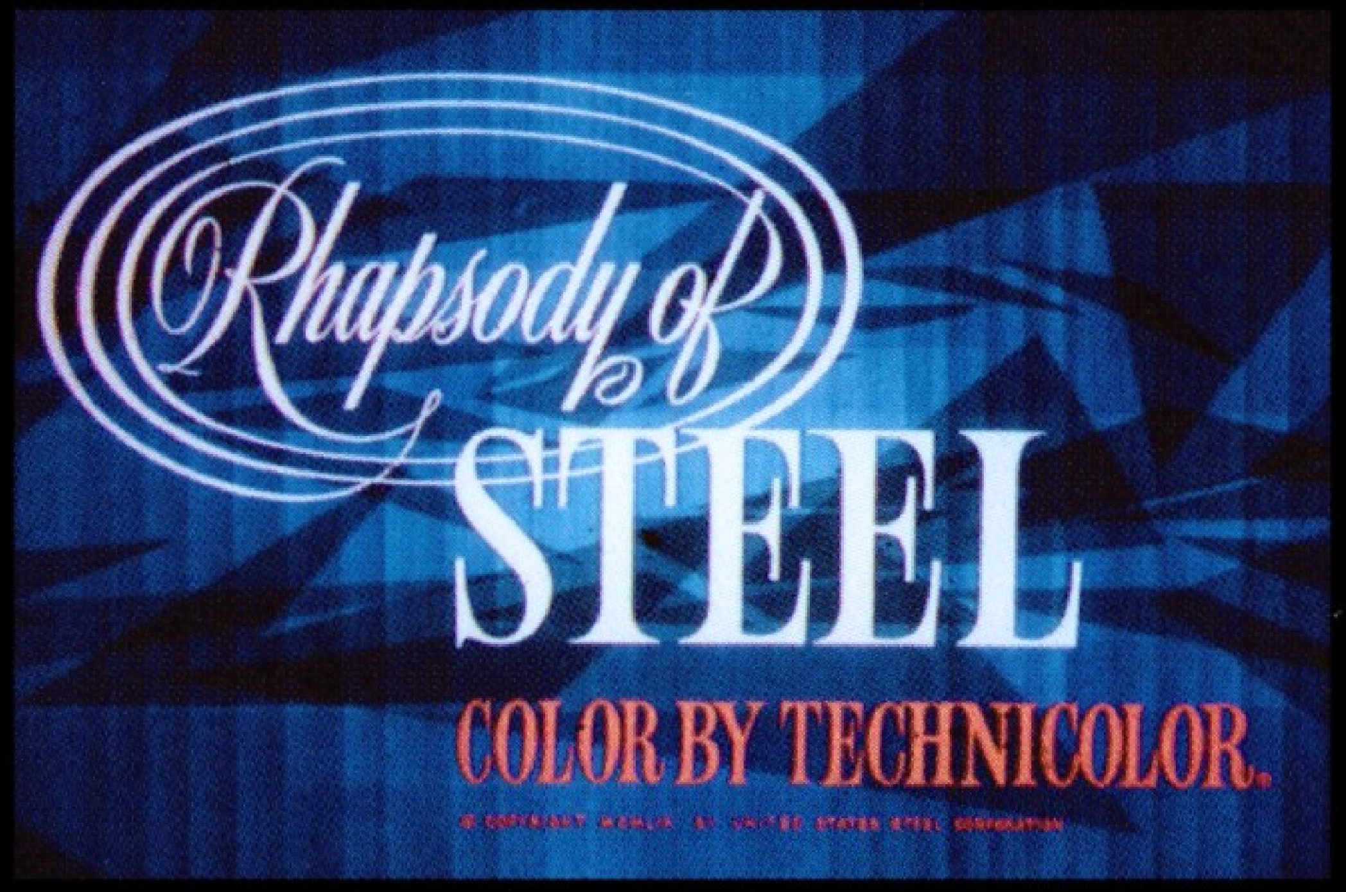


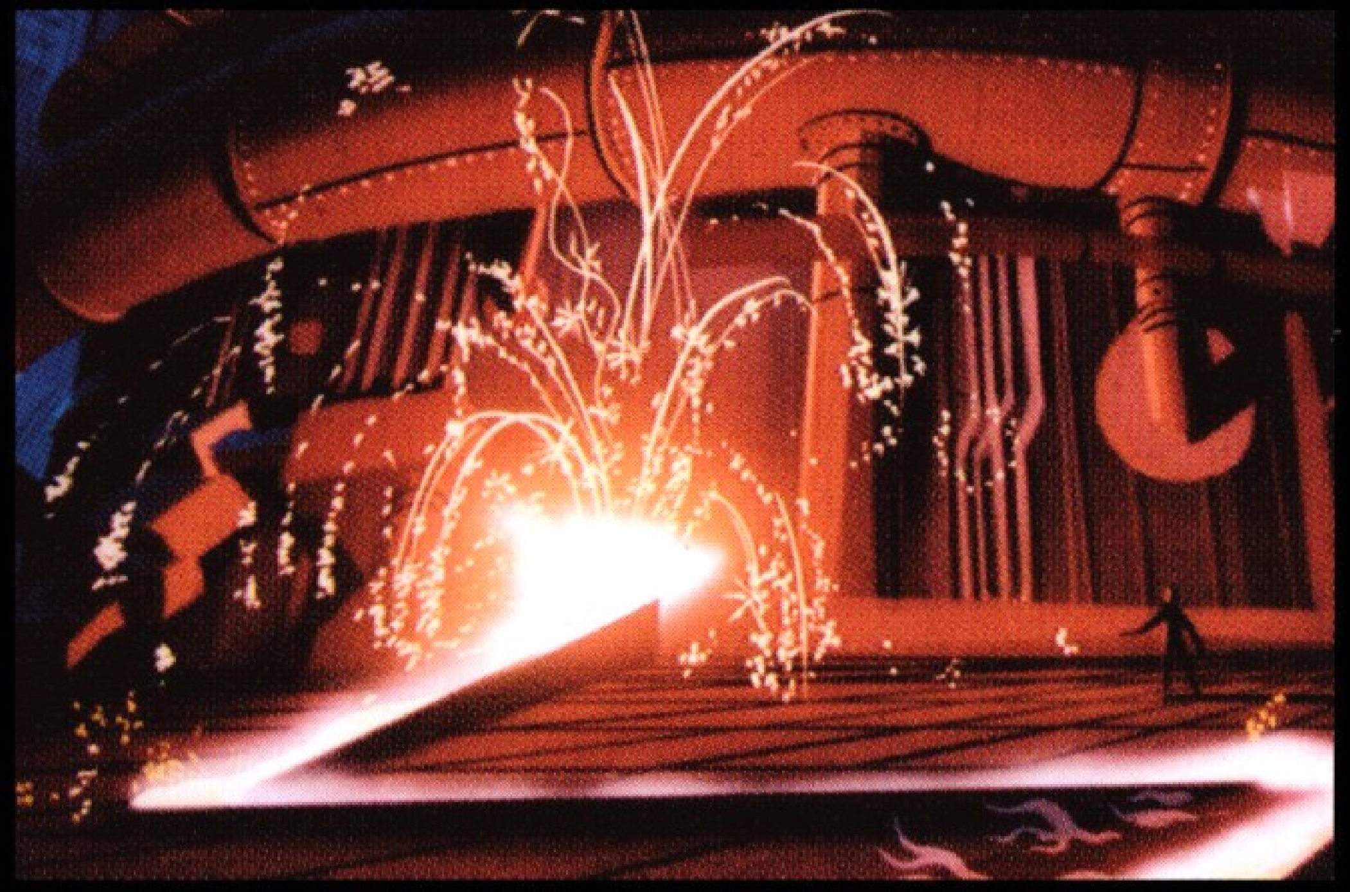
***DESTINATION EARTH* (1956)**
Director: Carl Urbano
Layout drawing
by Tom Oreb

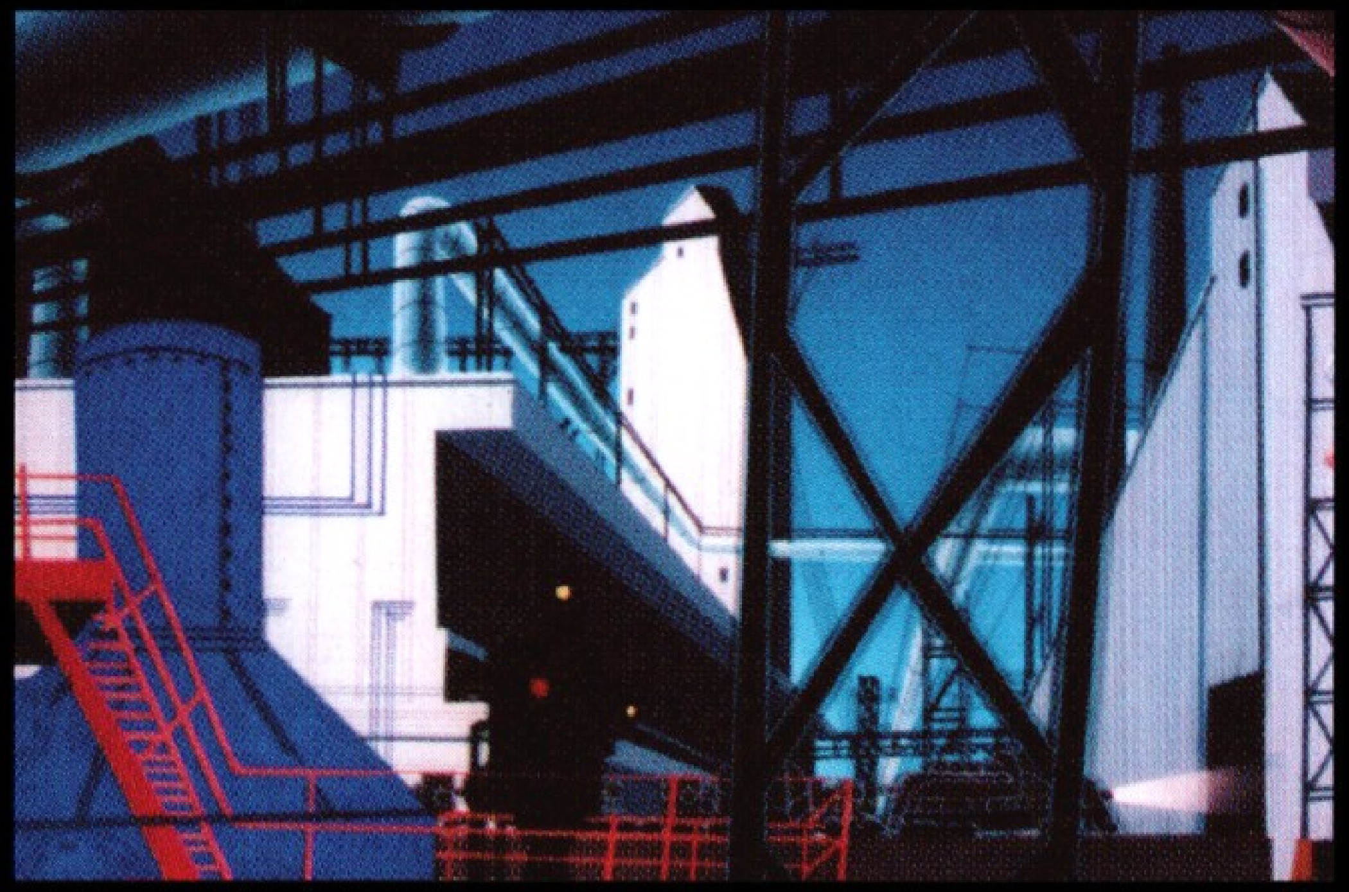


Employee Relations **(date unknown)**
Director unknown
Production cel and background

The floor and chair in this background were cut out of patterned fabrics, creating a striking contrast to the flatly colored characters in front.

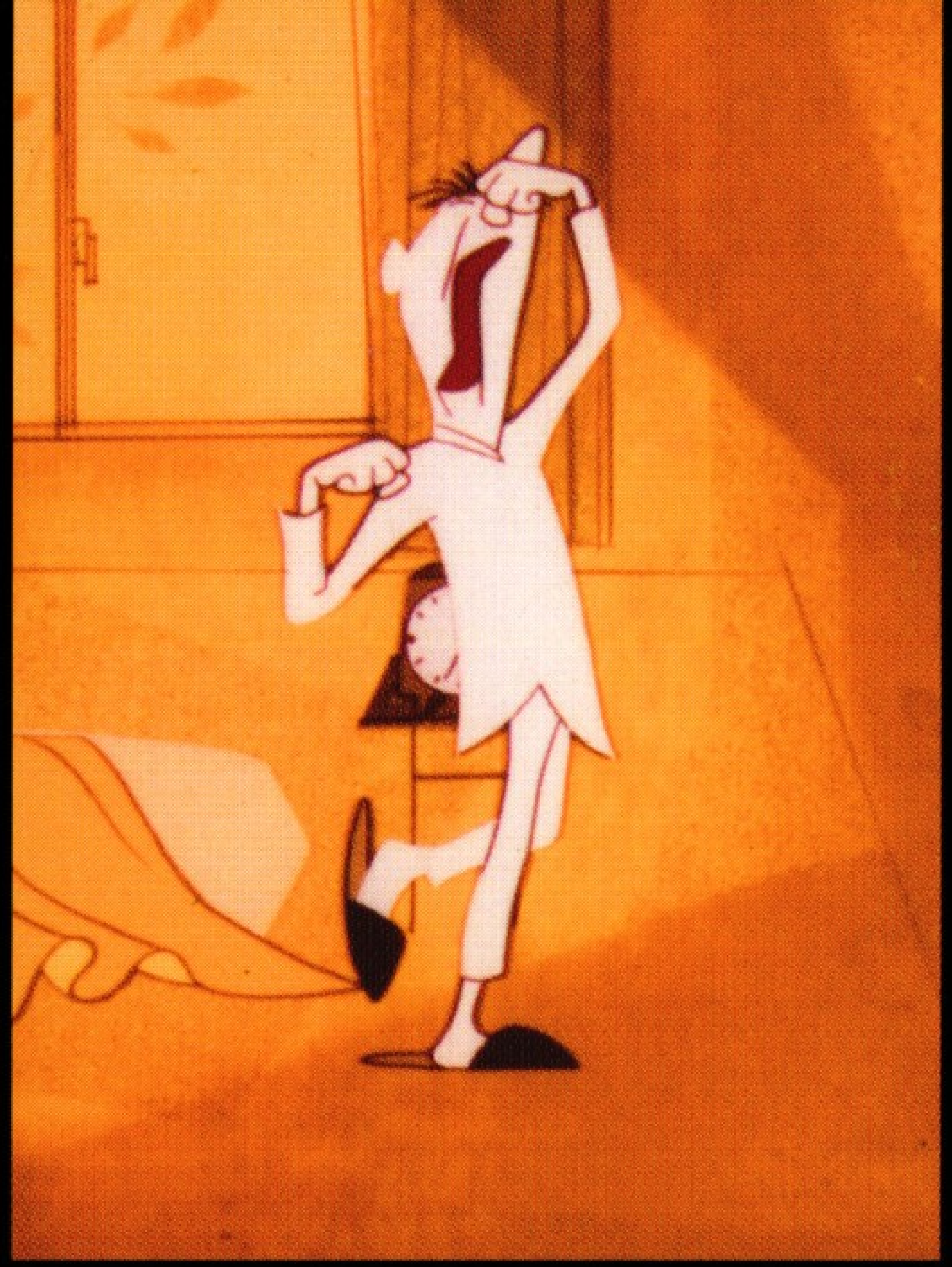


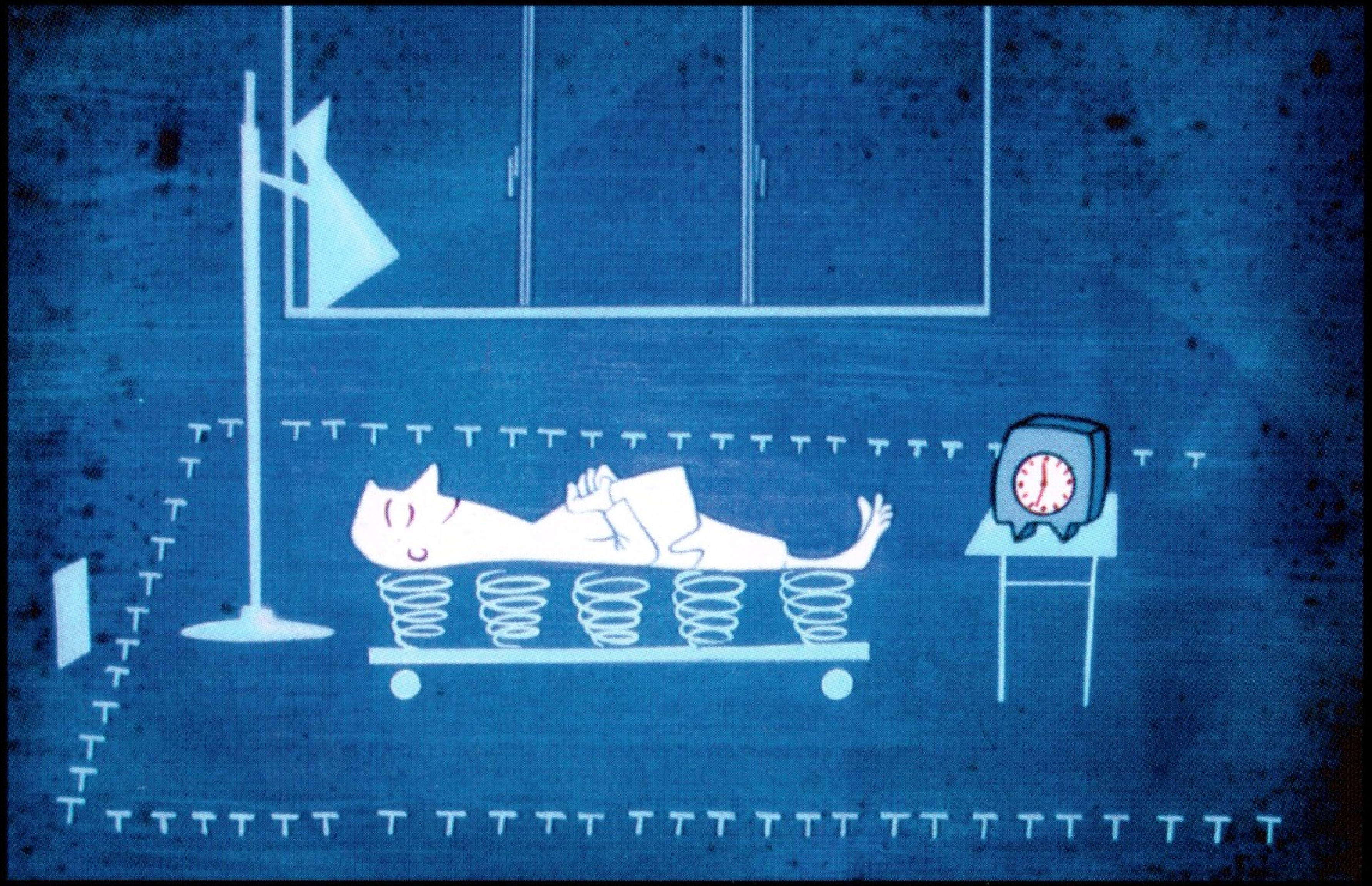


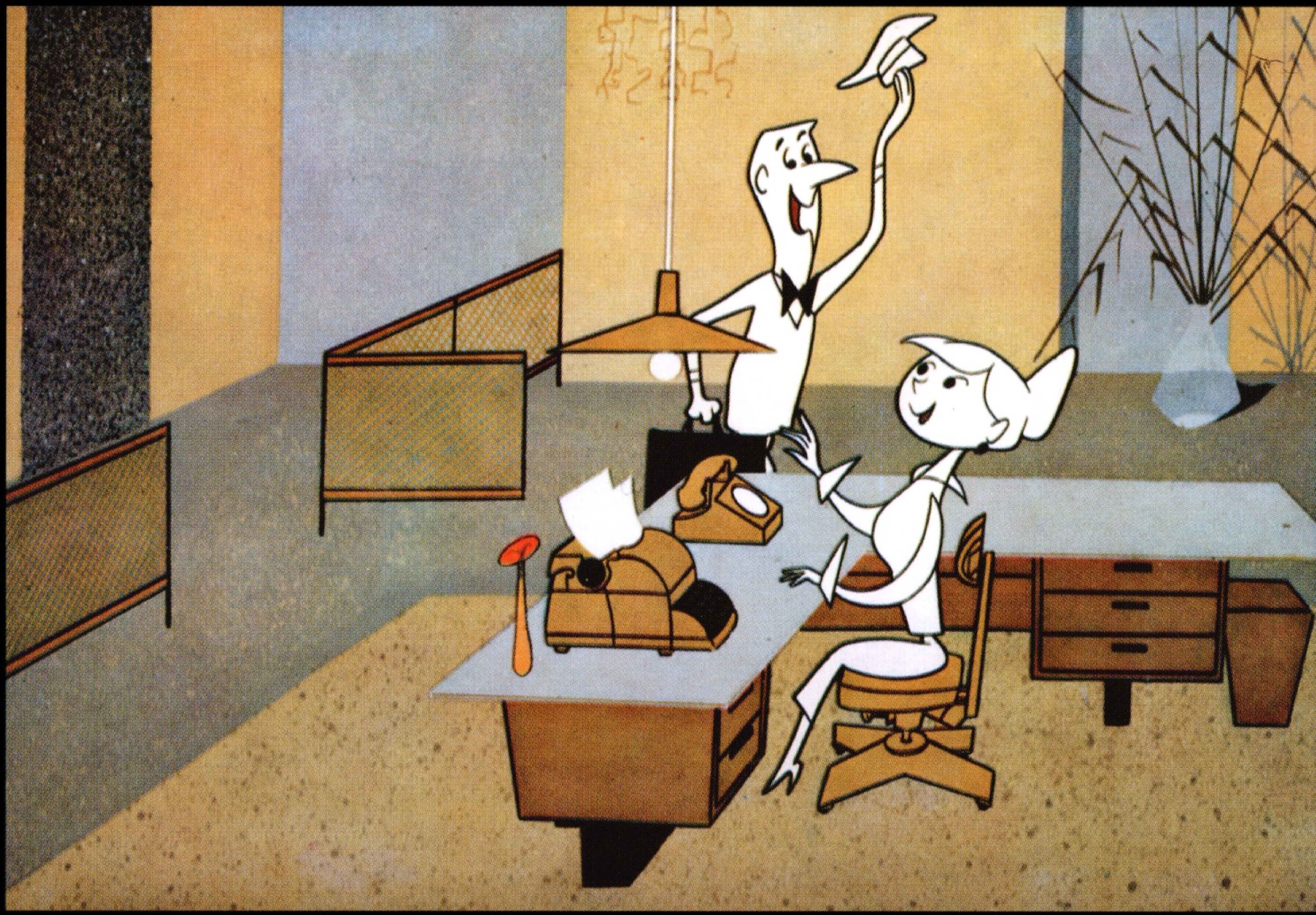


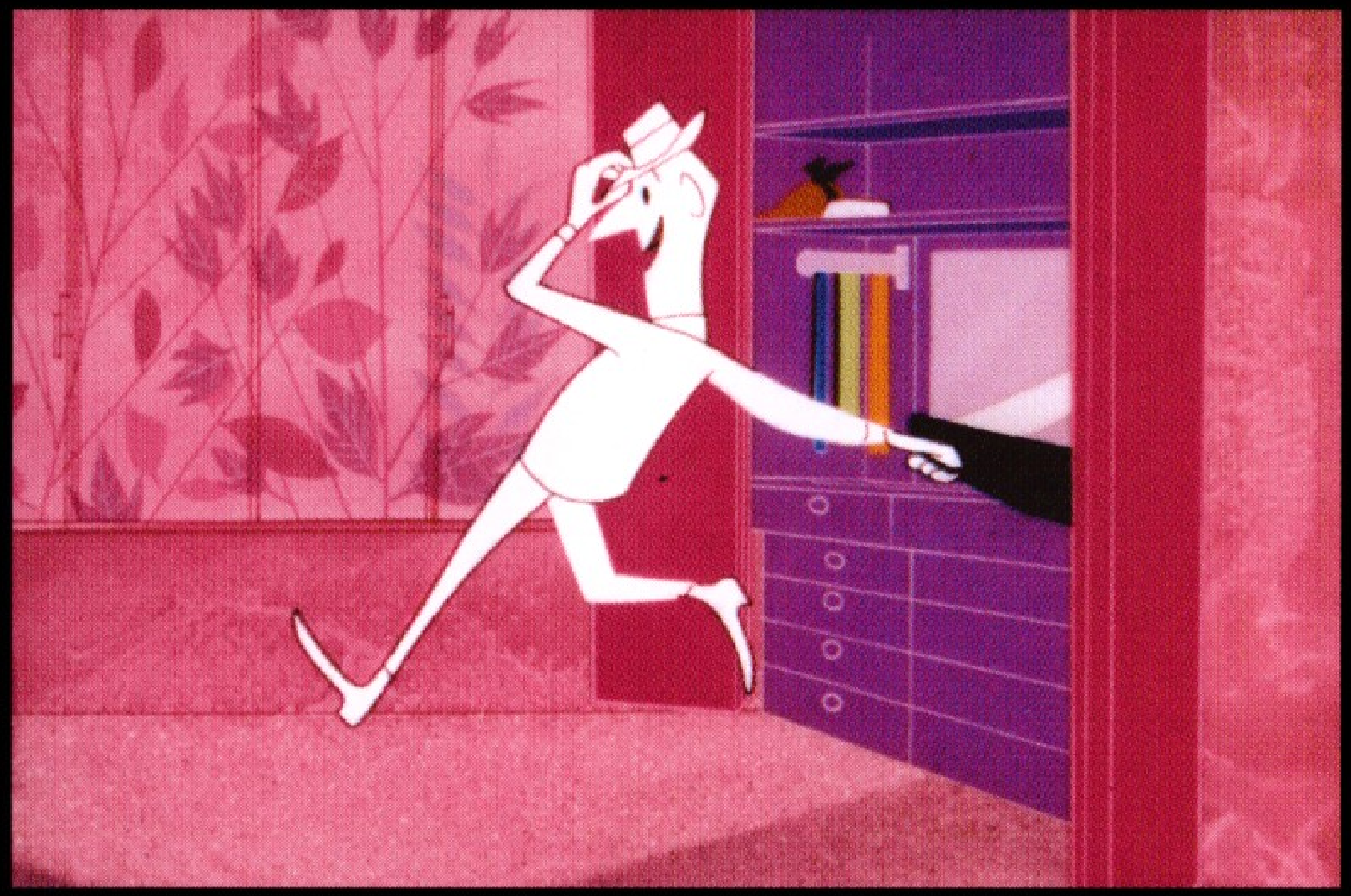
***Rhapsody of Steel* (1959)**
Director: Carl Urbano
Film stills

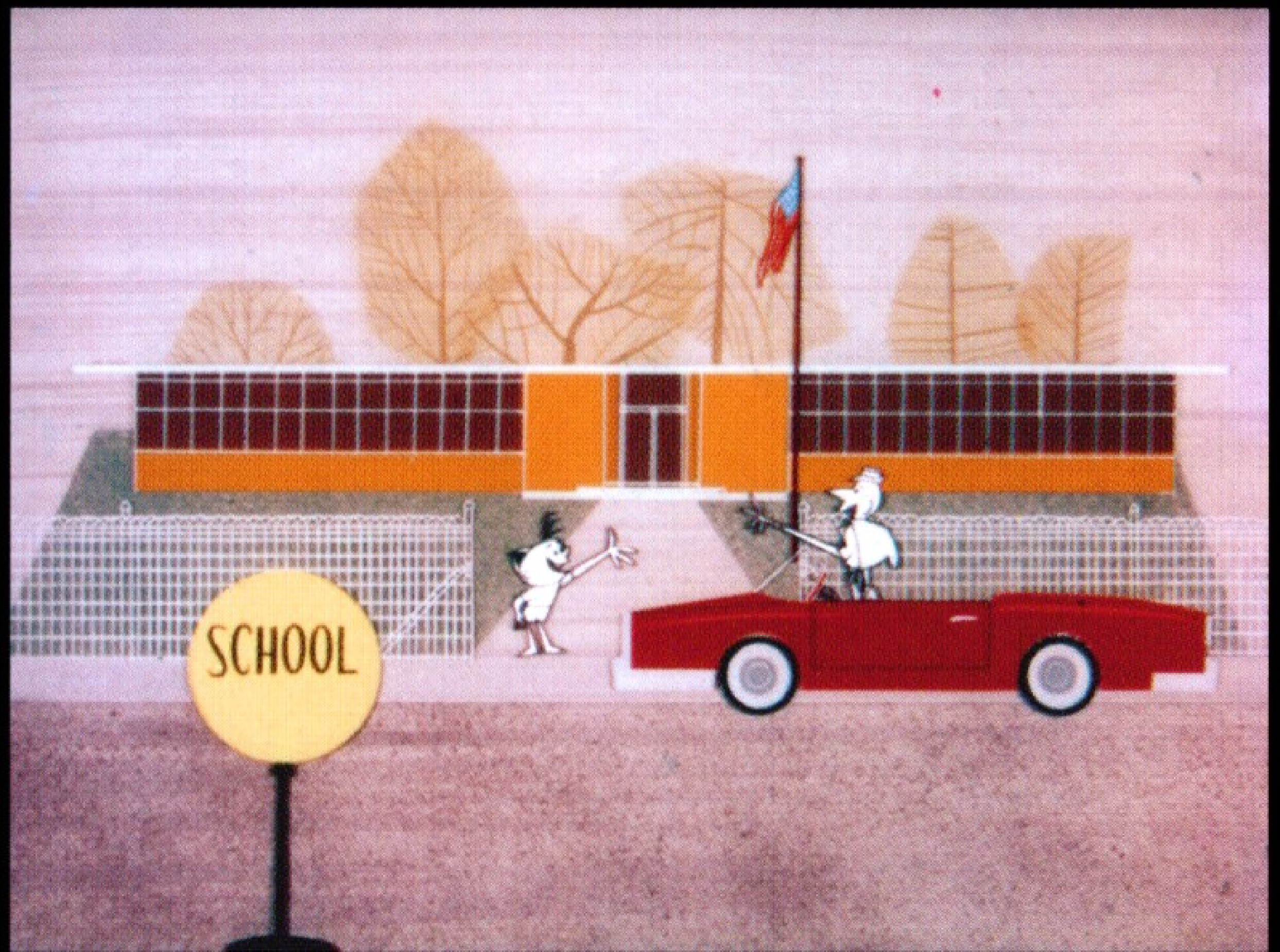
Among the film's highlights is a four-minute pantomime cartoon sequence that demonstrates how steel plays a vital role in the everyday activities of an average American household. The characters in this film-within-a-film are all painted solid white and set against backgrounds that are considerably less rendered than those throughout the rest of the film; the superb cartoon animation in this segment is provided by Emery Hawkins.

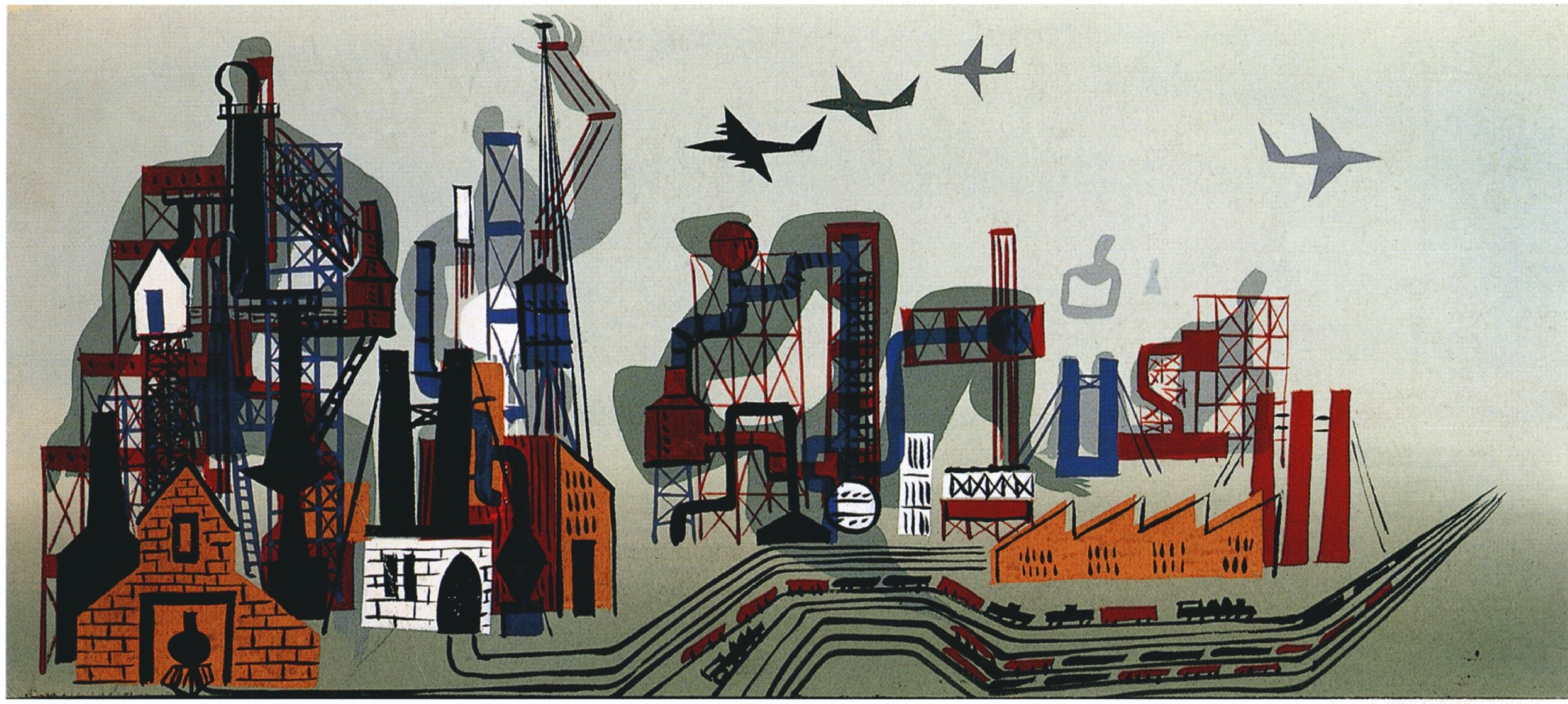






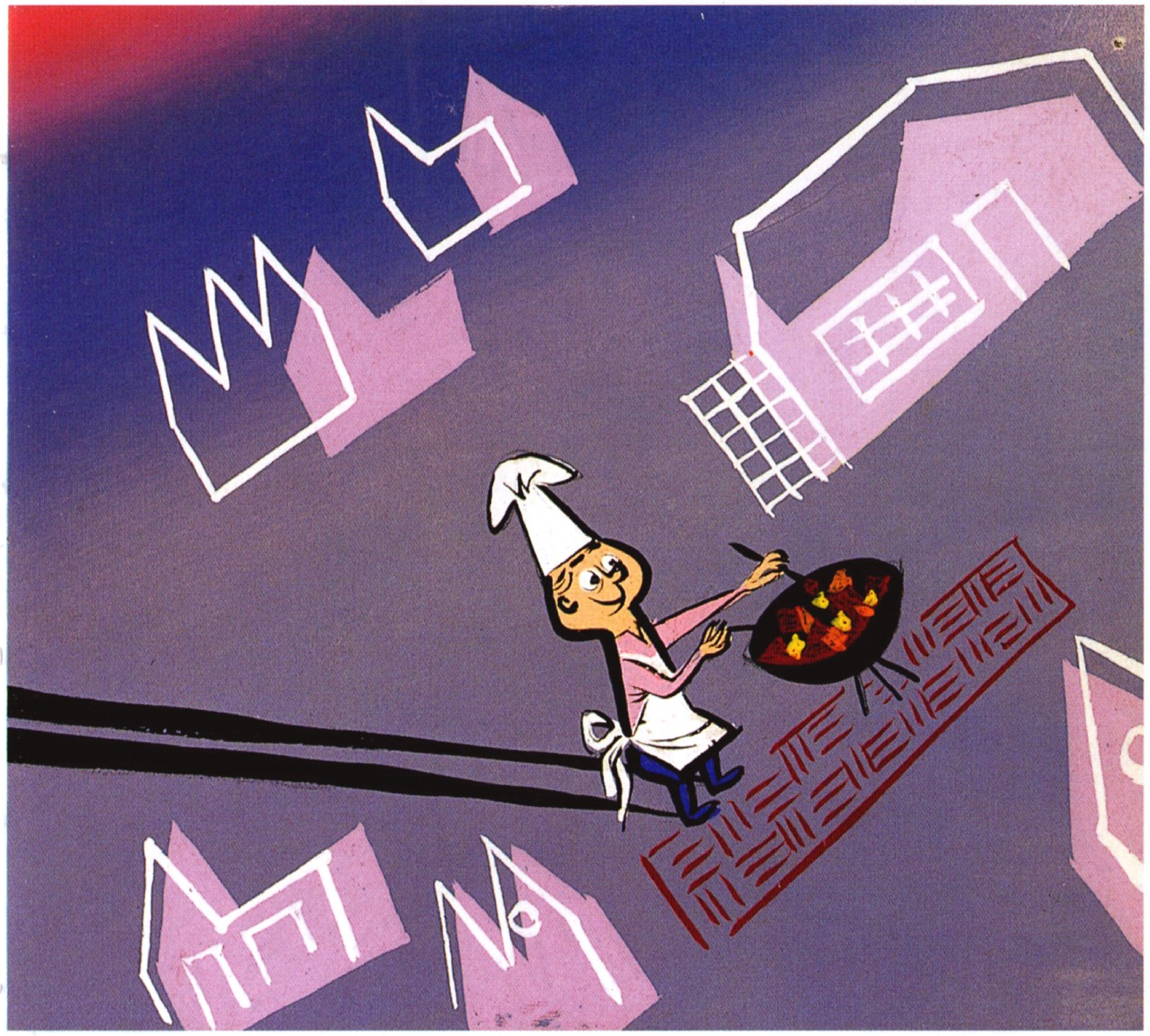



SCHOOL



***The Littlest Giant* (1955)**
Director: Carl Urbano
Concept paintings by Victor Haboush

Haboush recalls that the towering shadow forms in these paintings were directly inspired by the works of English sculptor Henry Moore.



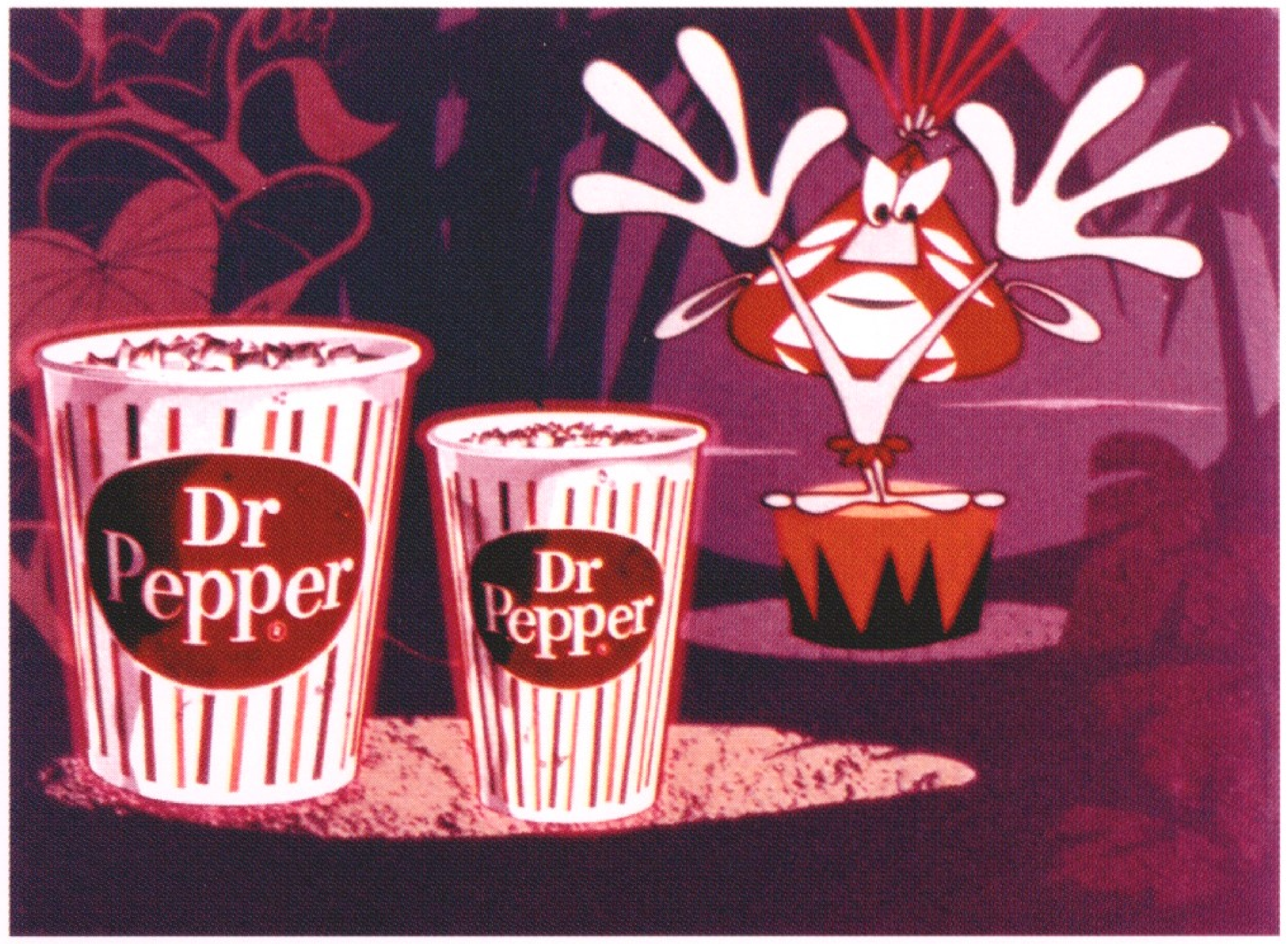
Sc 38
START
.50 L.O.C.
START
9F (tilt)
PAINT HOLE ON B.G. O.L.
CEL TO 12 00"
COVER BEFORE
CRASH THROUGH
Joe this cel OU 38
Lucile will do
But Roof on BG
Should be painted
2 cels later than OU 38
as it (OU 38) works upon
level #3
STOP #1
Sc 38
3.50 R.O.C.
SAUCER + Guy on cel
~~ANIM~~
~~REG. LINE~~

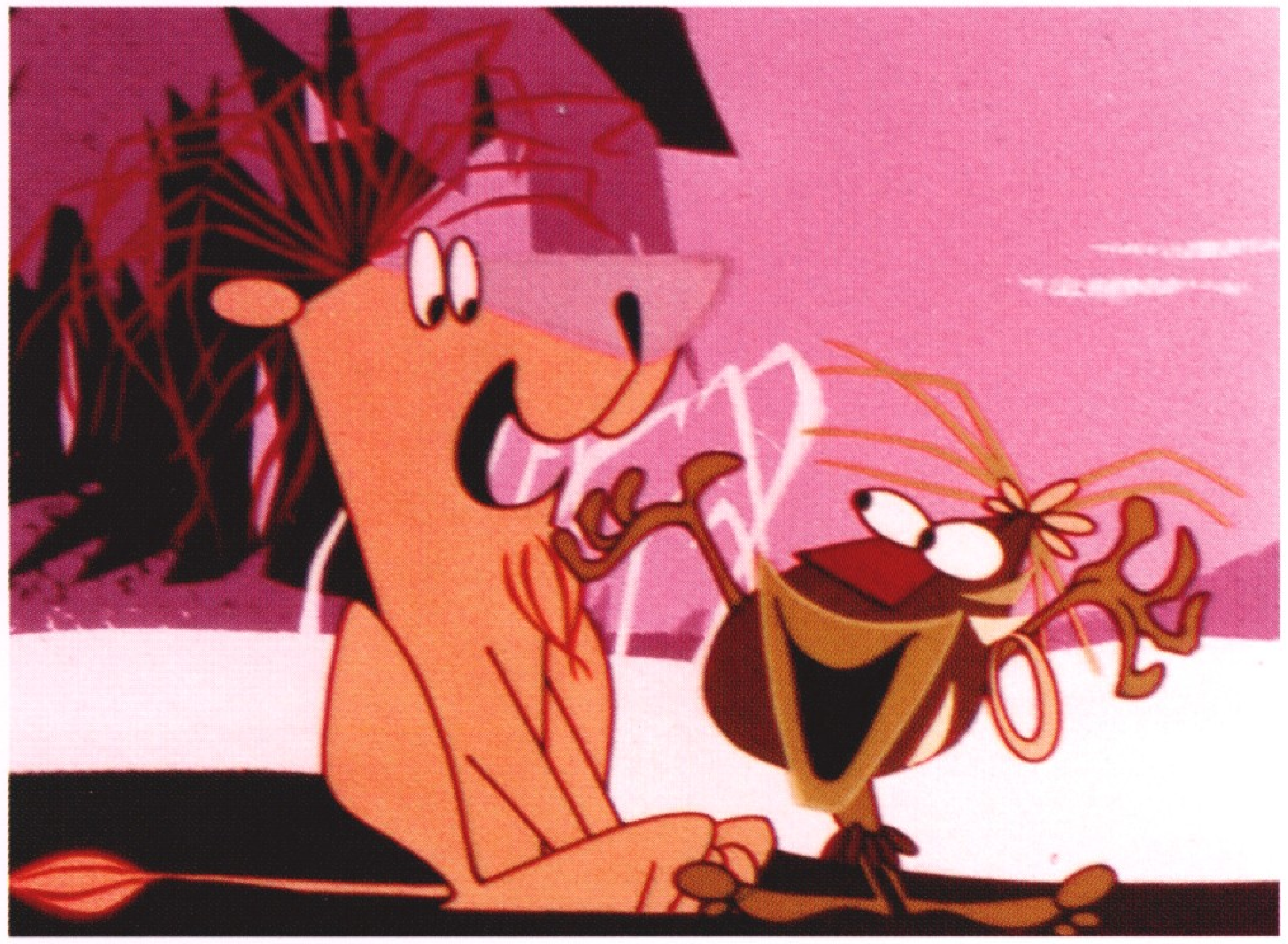
***Destination Earth* (1956)**
Director: Carl Urbano
Above: Layout drawing by Tom Oreb
Opposite: Concept painting by Victor Haboush

K

KEITZ & HERNDON

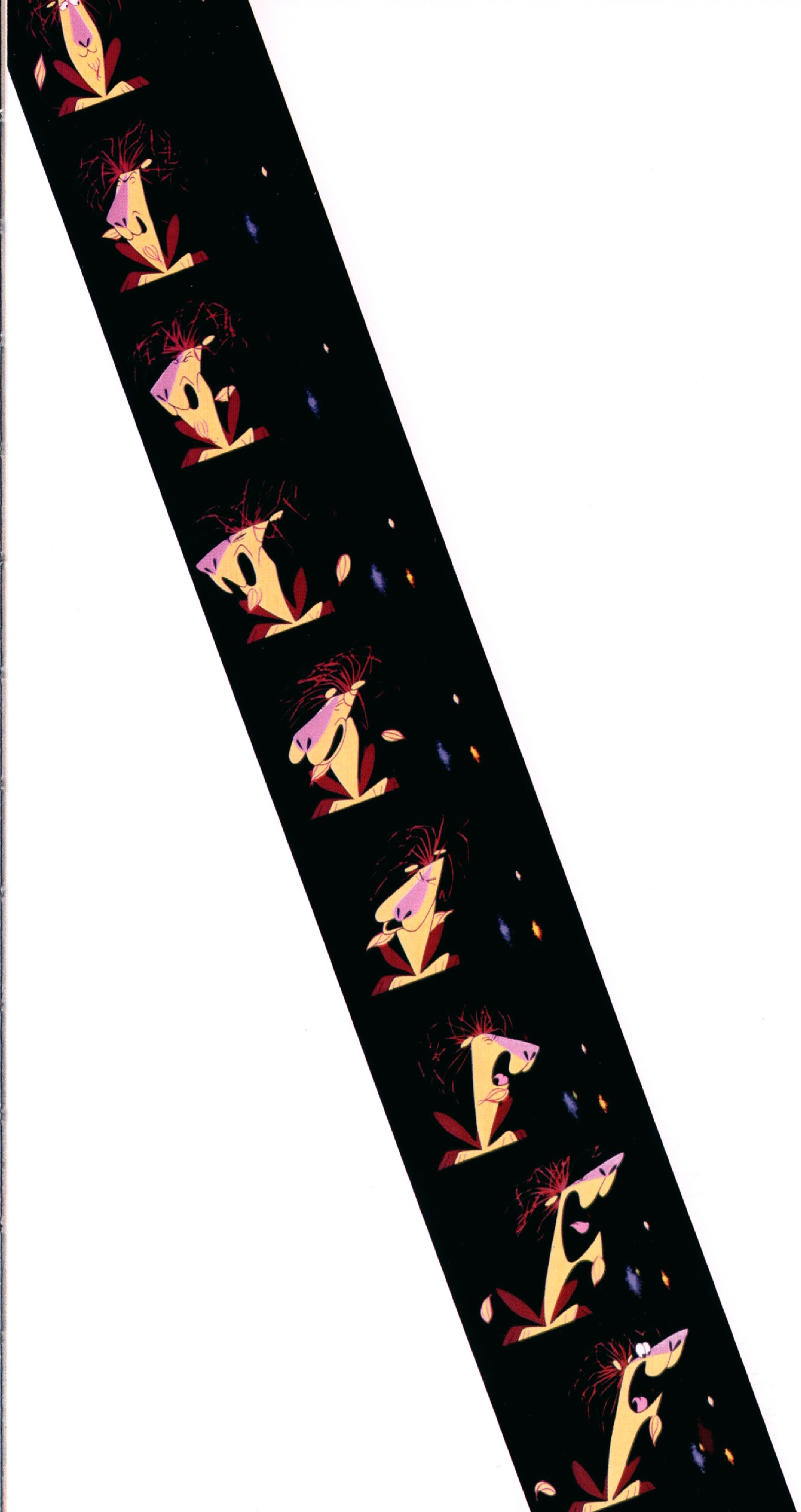
The vast majority of modern American animation in the 1950s was produced either in California or New York, but every so often a visually progressive studio surfaced in an unlikely city, as was the case with Keitz & Herndon, in Dallas, as well as Tully Rector and Bill Pierce's Group Productions, in Detroit, and Jack Schleh's Soundac, in Miami. Keitz & Herndon was founded in the early 1950s by Roddy Keitz (b. 1927) and Larry Herndon (b. 1926). The few examples of work by the studio that are available for viewing indicate that, in spite of Keitz & Herndon's isolation from the greater animation community, it had no difficulty creating highly polished animation that was comparable to the commercial work produced on the coasts. Keitz & Herndon's best known work is the super-stylized early 1960s animated TV series *Jot*, produced for the Southern Baptist Radio-Television Commission.

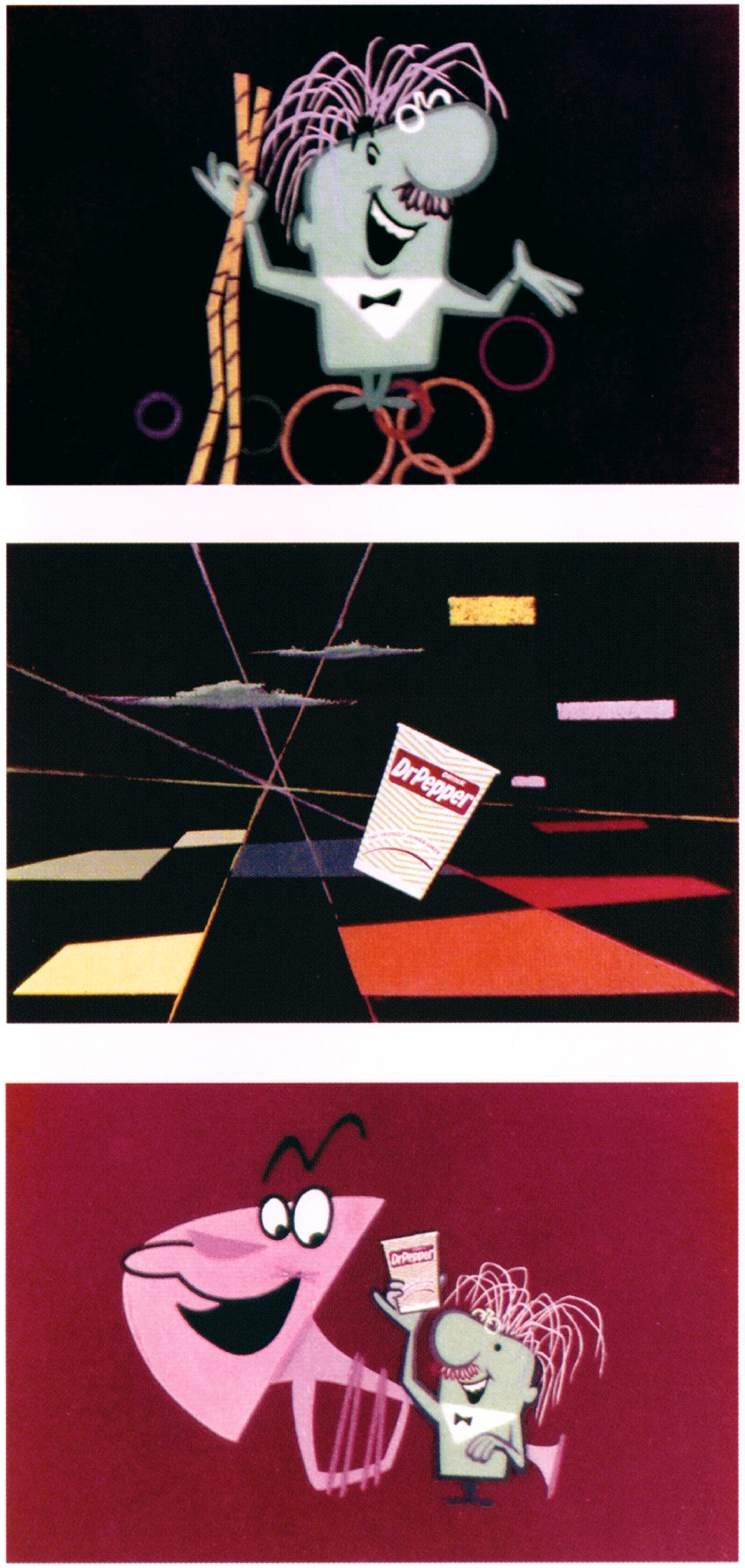




DR. PEPPER "WITCH DOCTOR"
THEATRICAL COMMERCIAL
Designers: Roddy Keitz,
Tom Young, and Bob Dalzell

The "Witch Doctor" theatrical commercial uses a series of highly inventive shapes in the designs of its two main characters—the witch doctor and the lion; the studio's singular design sensibility was the likely result of being so far removed from the rest of the industry.




Dr Pepper
Dr Pepper

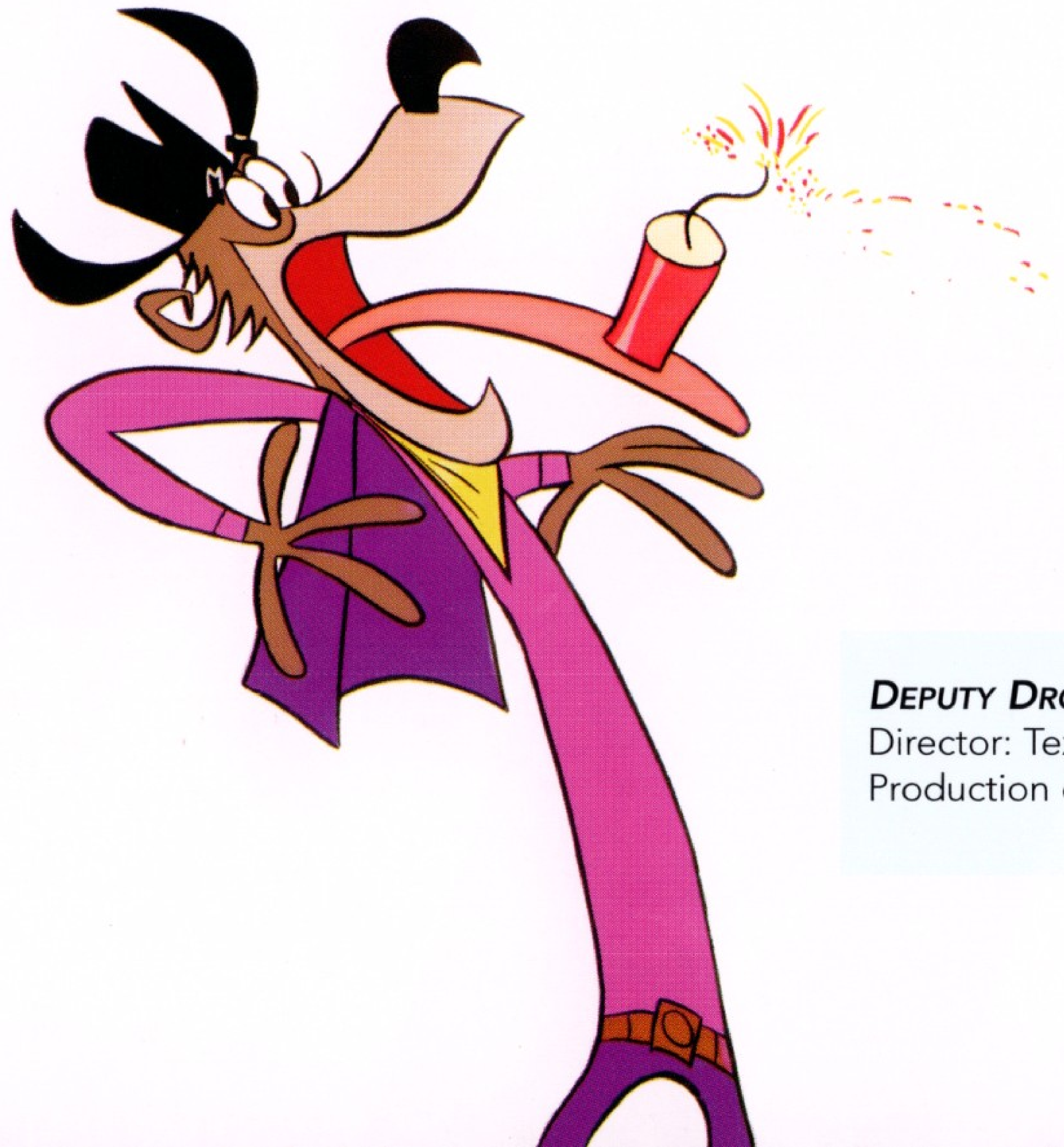
Dr. Pepper theatrical commercial
Designers: Roddy Keitz,
Tom Young, and Bob Dalzell

M

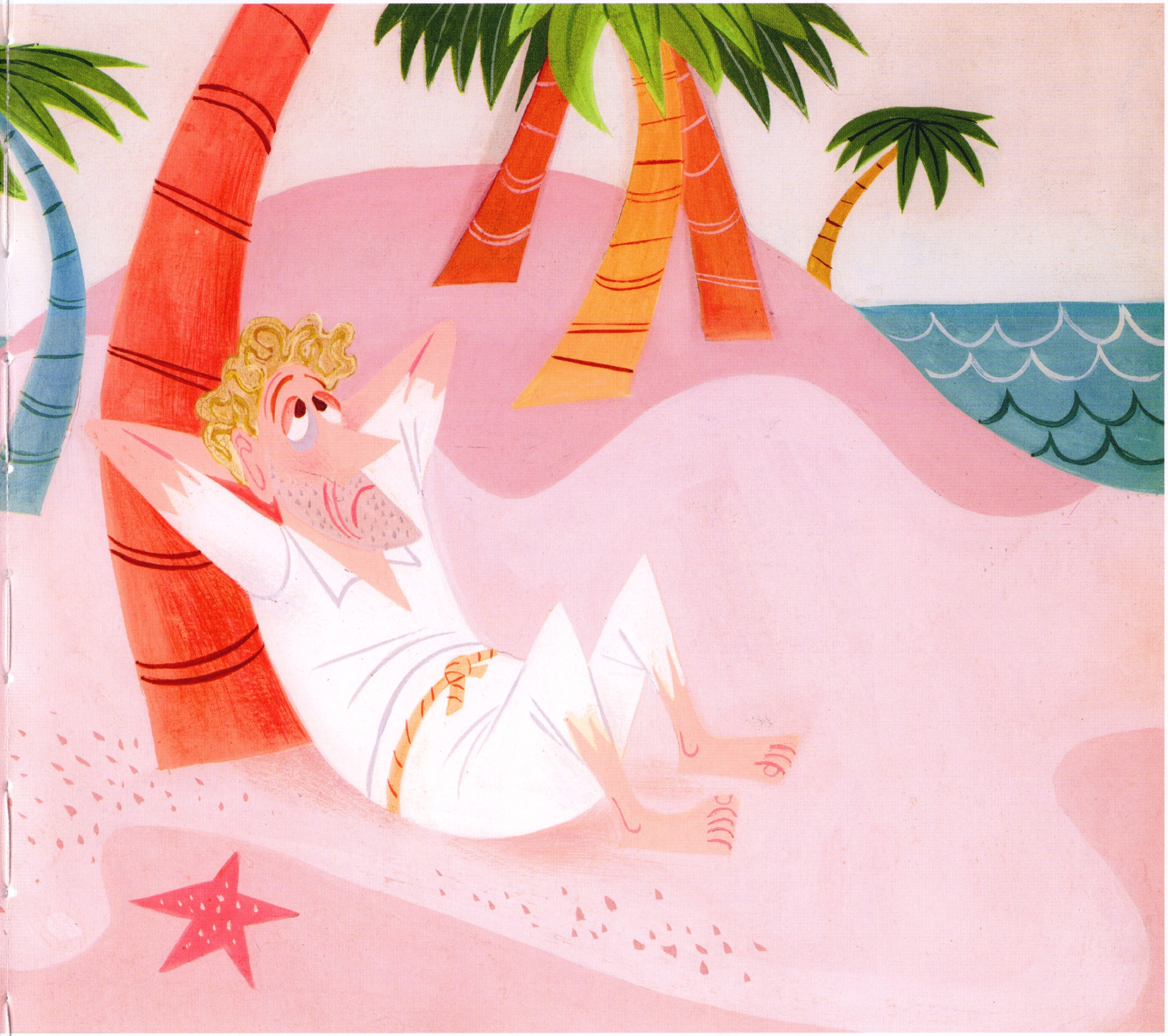
MGM

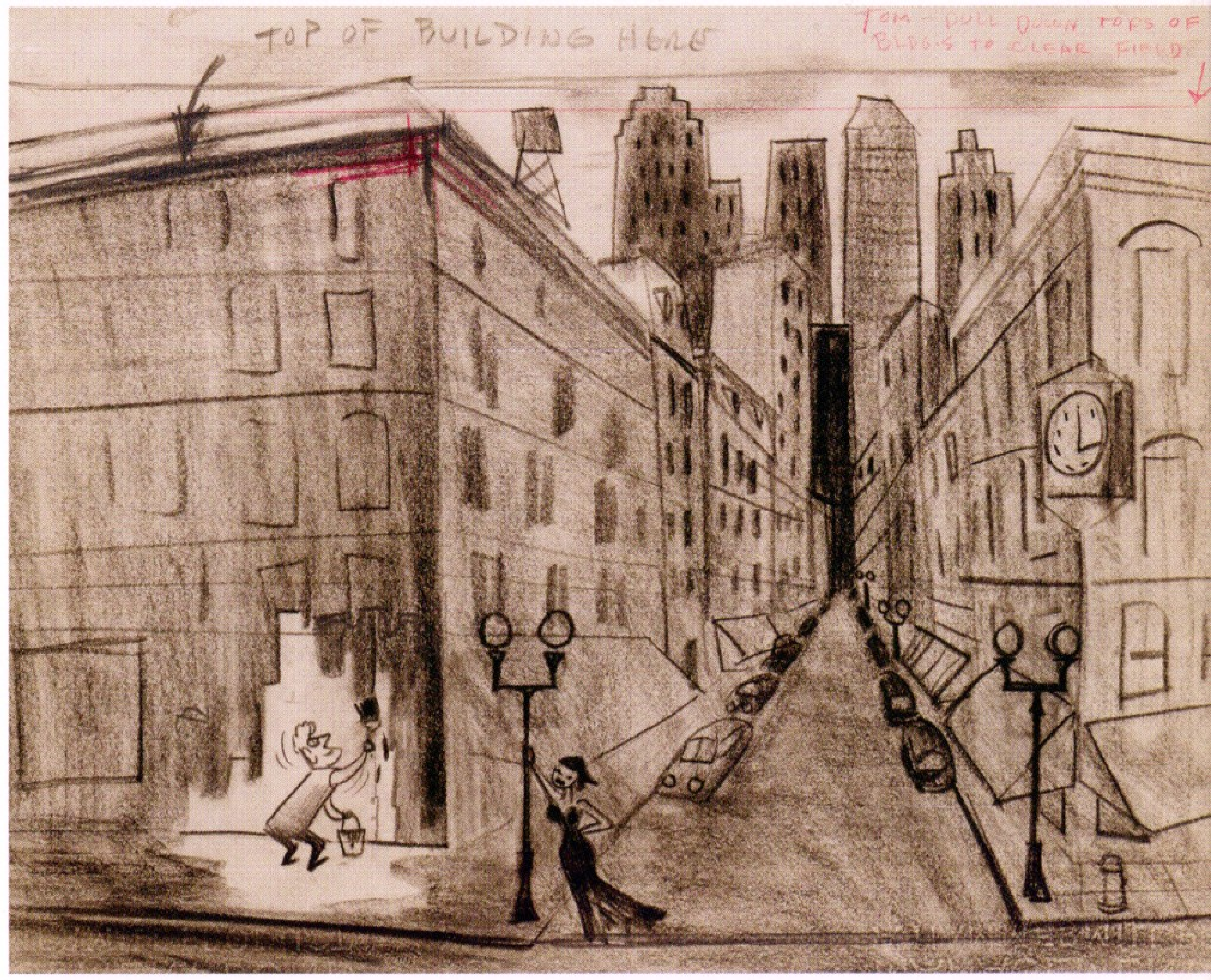
Tex Avery (1908–1980) is a director famed for his no-holds-barred brand of humor, frenetic timing and pacing, and outrageous character expressions and "takes," but he receives little acknowledgment for being one of the early adopters of the contemporary look. Though his brand of Modernism was never trailblazing, Avery embraced the modern look earlier than most other Hollywood theatrical short directors. His first and incidentally most extreme experiment in the contemporary vein was *Symphony in Slang* (1951), a film designed by Tom Oreb. The cartoon visualized slang expressions at face value; for example, when the boys are "hanging around the malt shop," they're literally hanging from poles off the side of the building. The film's high-style design owed much to Oreb, who not only designed the characters but also laid out the entire picture. To accommodate Oreb's un-Avery-like style of drawing, the animation is noticeably more limited than the average Avery picture, but it is smartly executed to the benefit of the design. When the main character is punching a cow, the only part of the cow that moves is its head, which bobs up and down, creating a humorous effect. In a scene with a pianist who "plays by ear," the entire body is held still except for his ear, an example of stylized animation being used to help sell the gag.

Following this early experiment, Avery hired Ed Benedict in 1952 as his full-time layout artist and character model artist. Benedict was assigned the task of updating the look of the films, but Avery did not cede the same type of control to Benedict as he had to Oreb for his experimental one-shot *Symphony in Slang*. As a director, Avery's main goal was to create cartoons that would get across his gags, and this prevented Benedict from doing a completely modern overhaul on the films. "I had to create the background around the stuff that Tex had laid out," explains Benedict. "I couldn't design a layout by making a pattern and a nice contemporary-looking scene, like some of Maurice Noble's stuff and most all of UPA's stuff." Nevertheless, the cartoons stand apart from the majority of theatrical shorts at the time, and Benedict's presence is felt strongly in the films released in 1954 and 1955, such as *Dixieland Droopy, Field and Scream, The First Bad Man, Deputy Droopy,* and *Cellbound*.

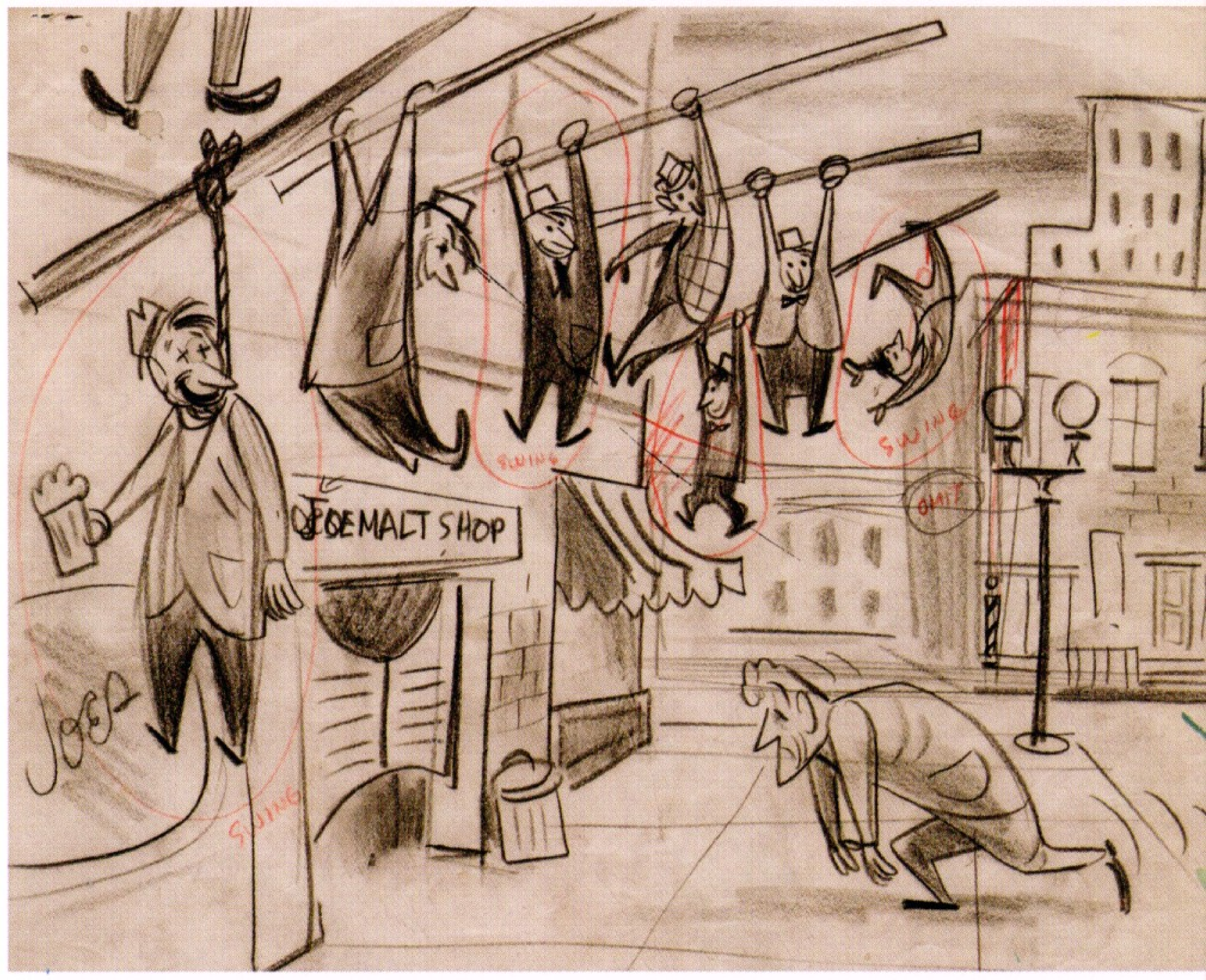


Deputy Droopy **(1955)**
Director: Tex Avery
Production cel





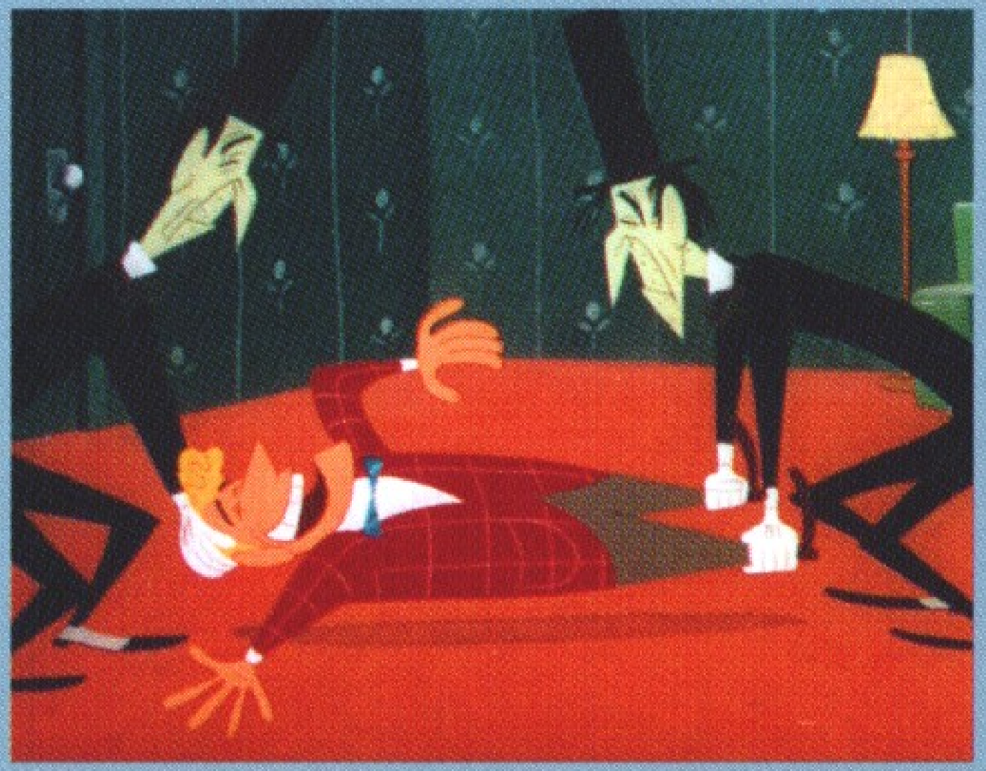
TOP OF BUILDING HERE
TOM – PULL DOWN TOPS OF BLDGS TO CLEAR FIELD

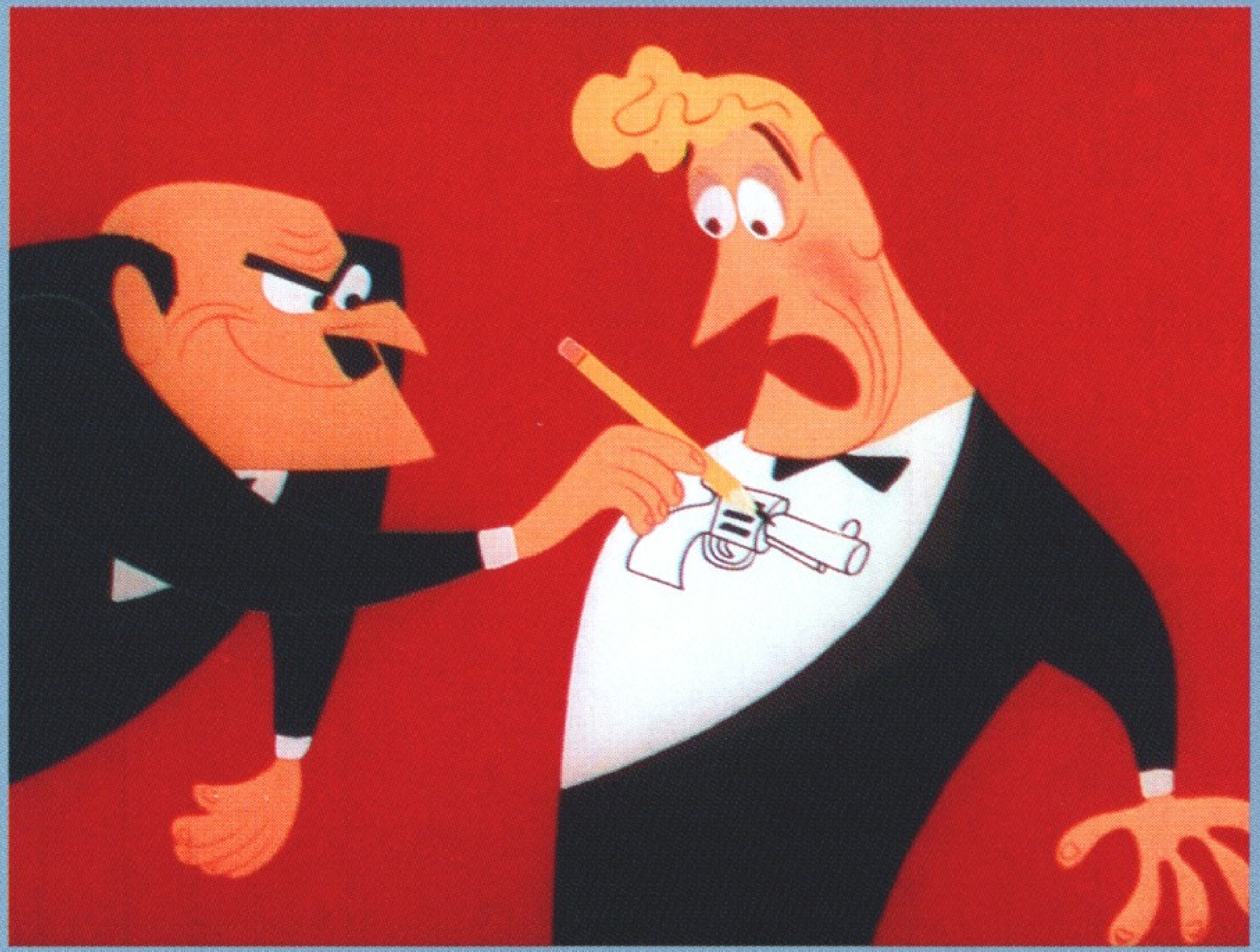


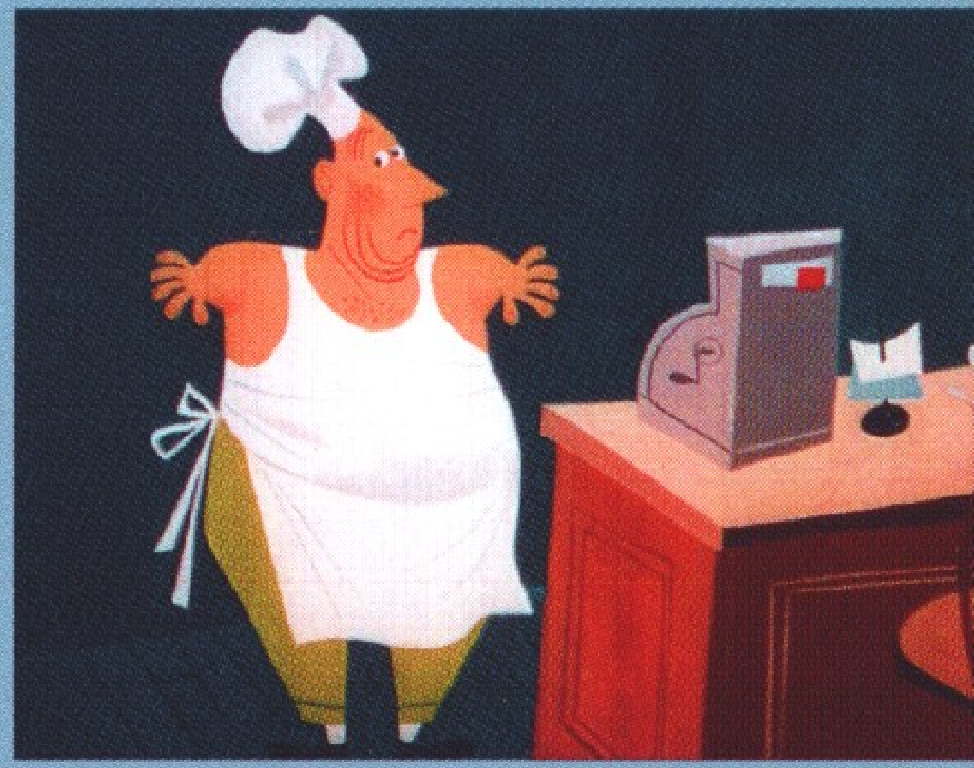
JOE MALT SHOP
JOE
SWING
SWING
SWING
SWING
OMIT

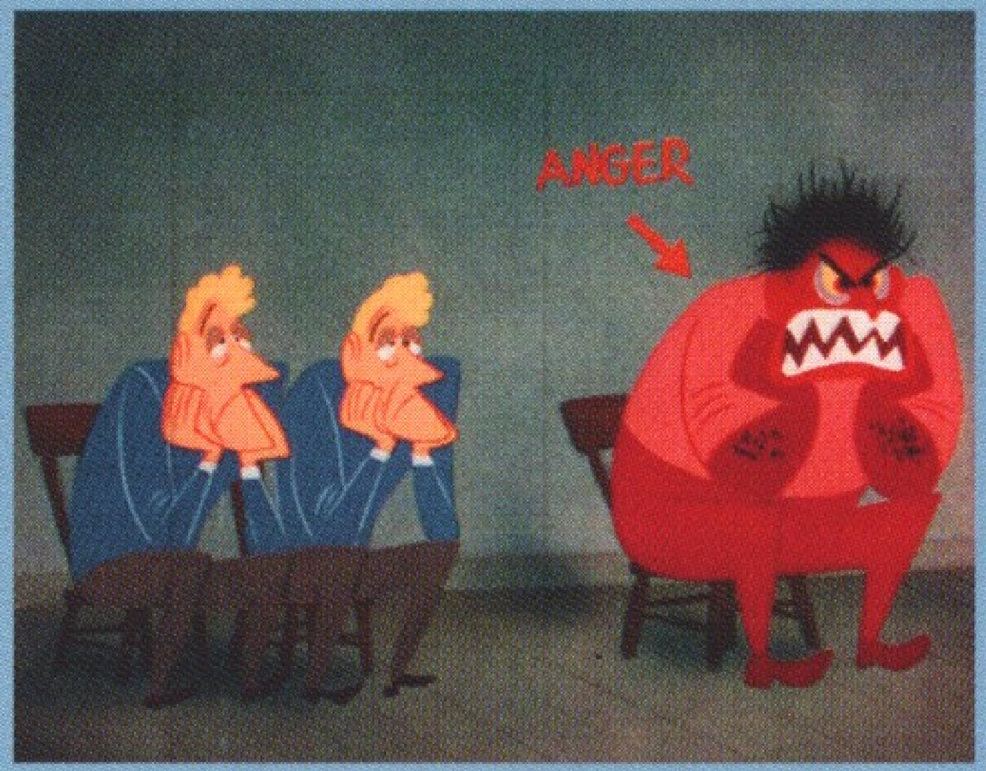
***Symphony in Slang* (1951)**
Director: Tex Avery
Above: Background painting
Right: Layout drawings by Tom Oreb

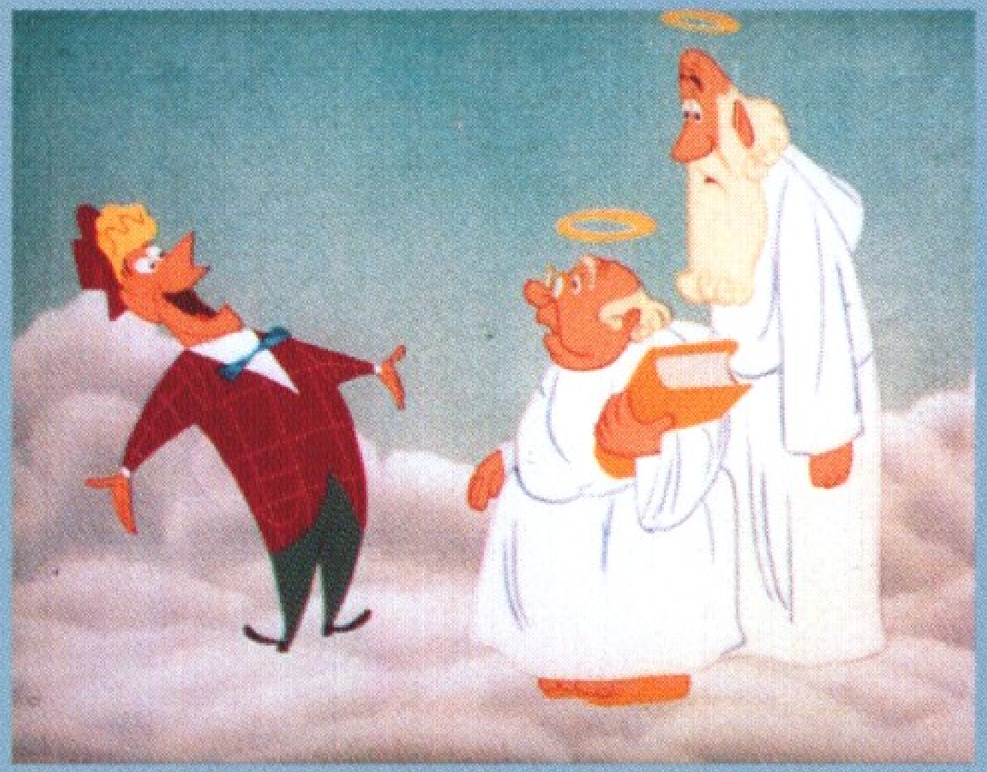
HELD
ANIMATES.
LIFE

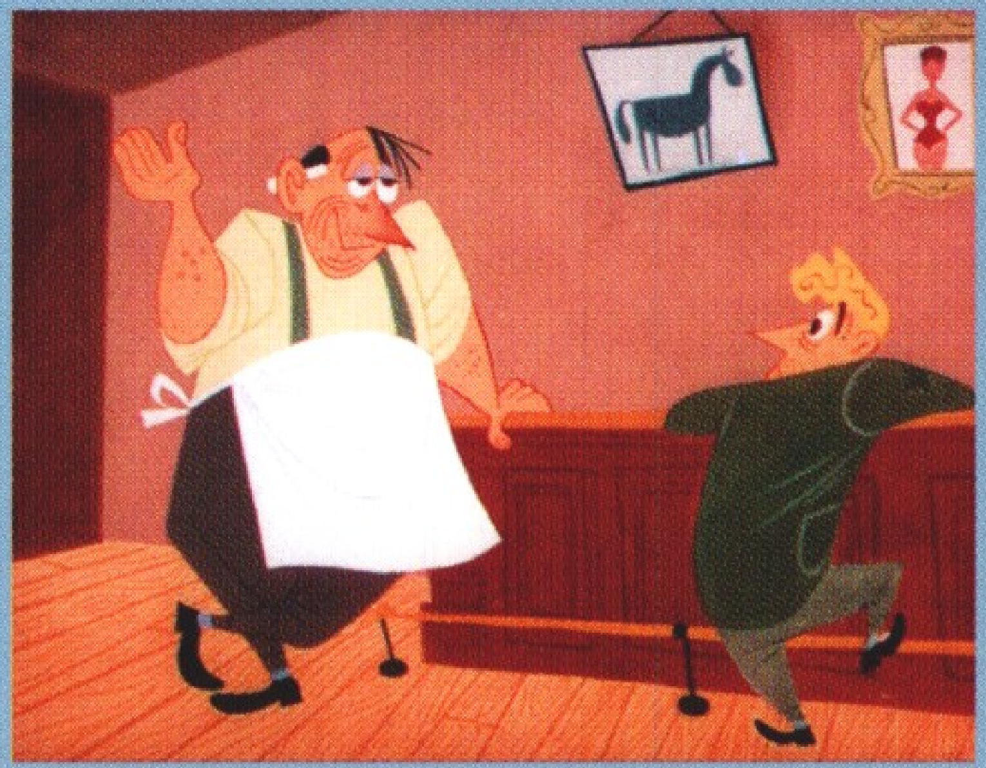


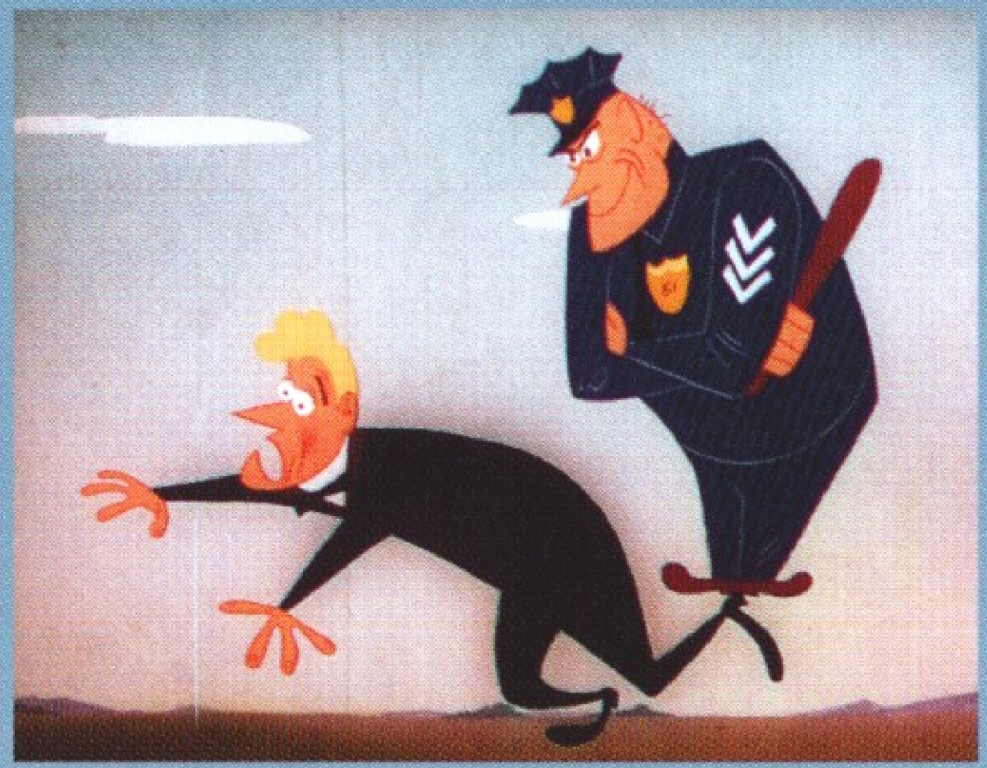


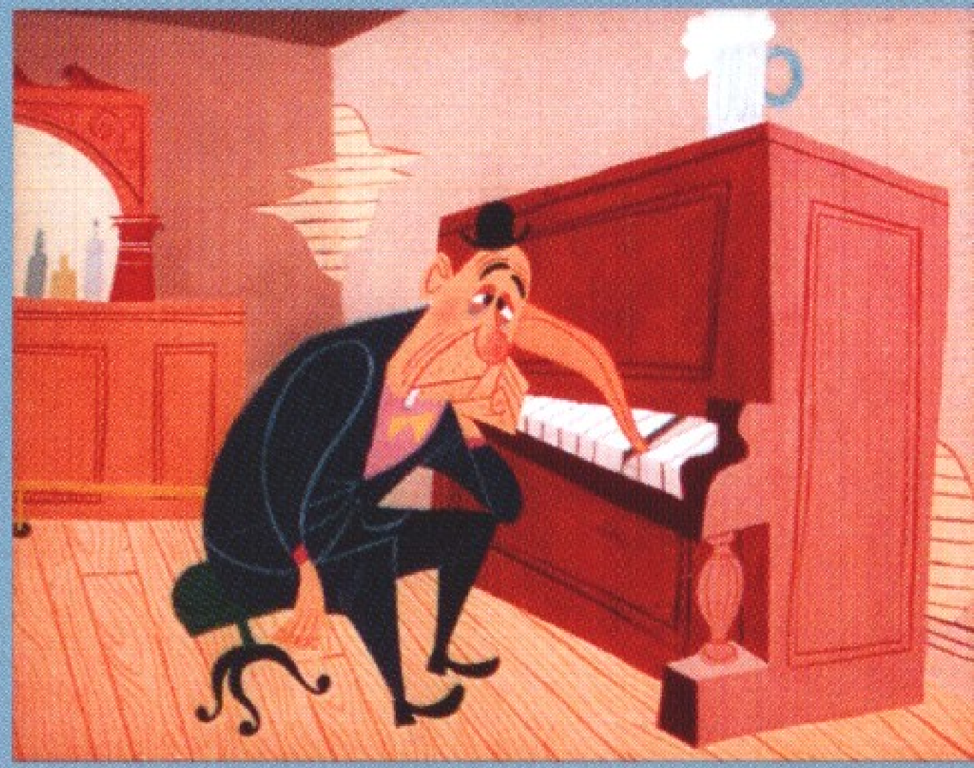


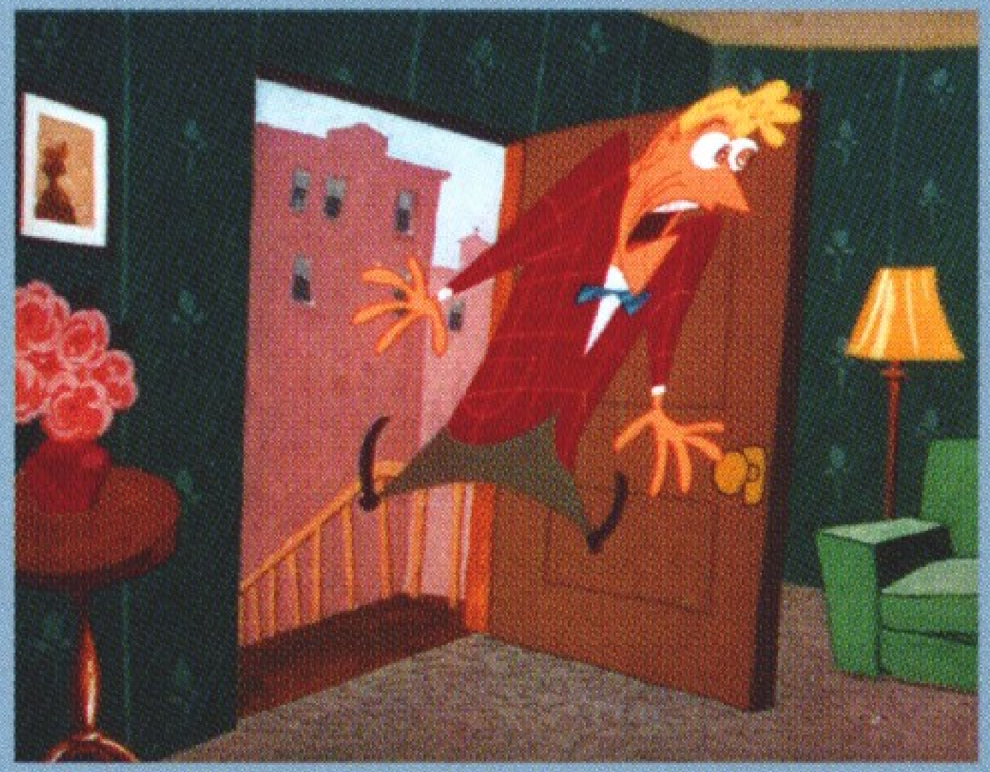


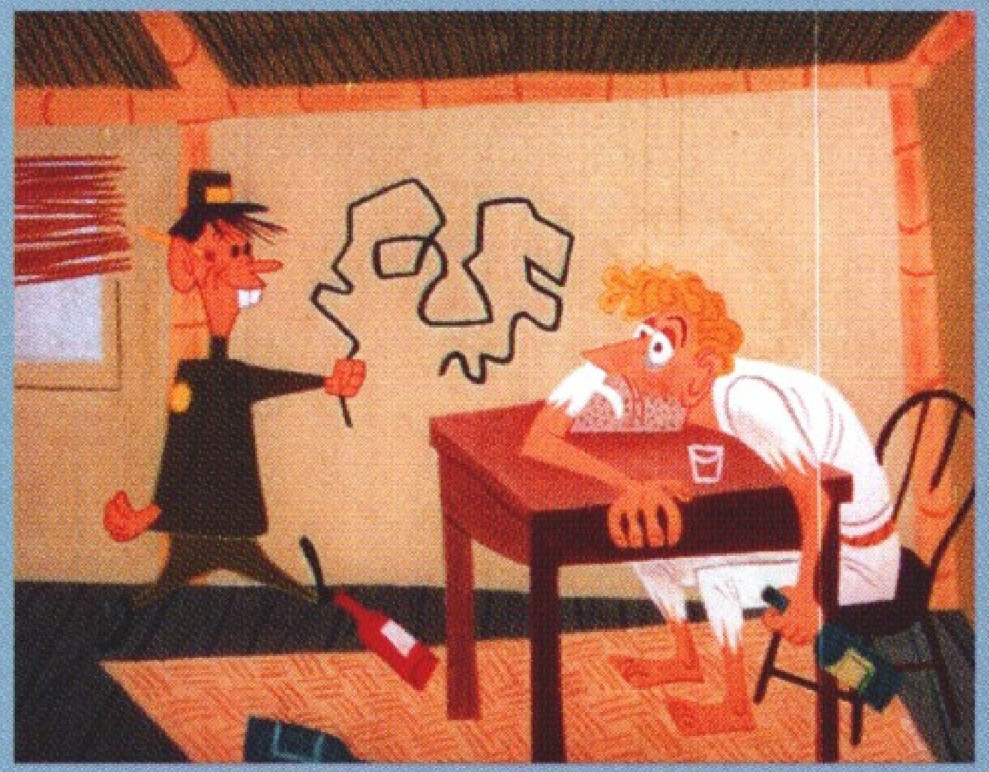


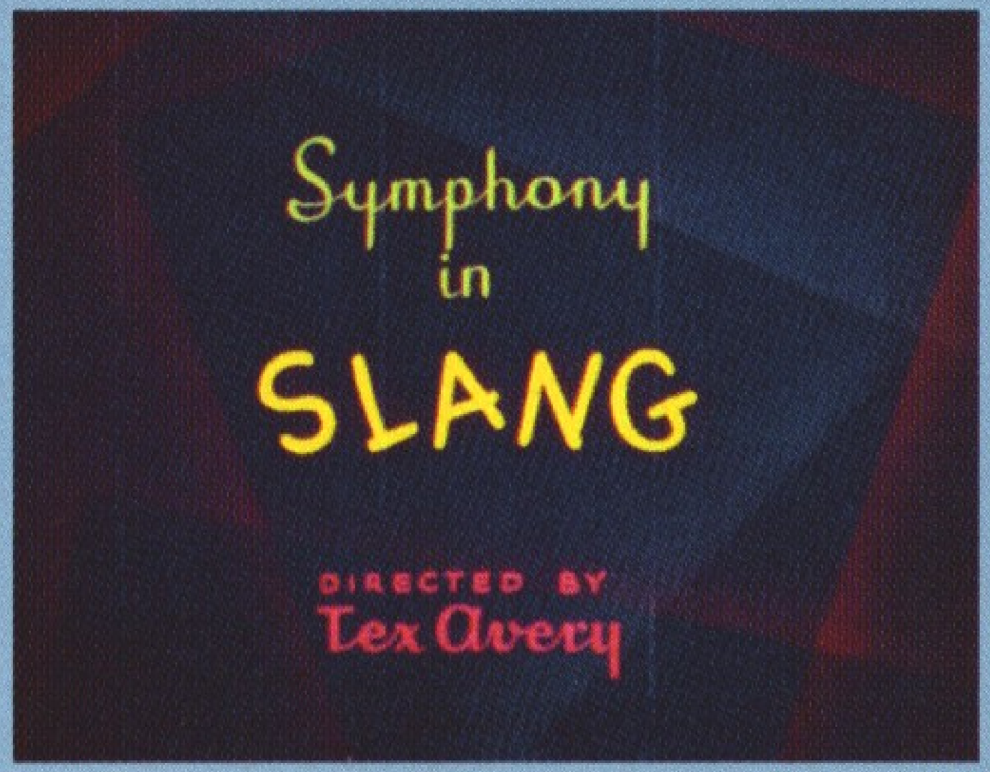


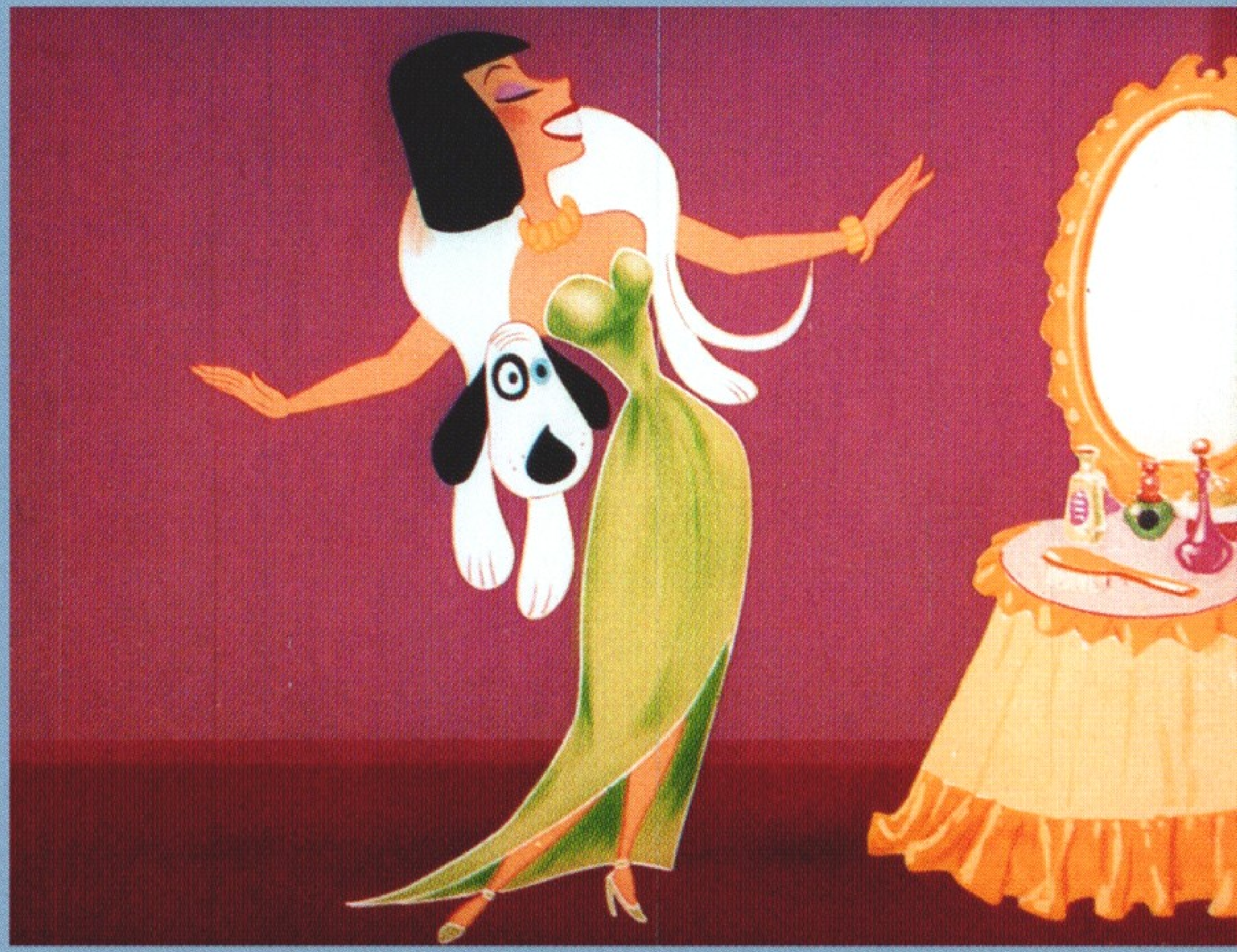




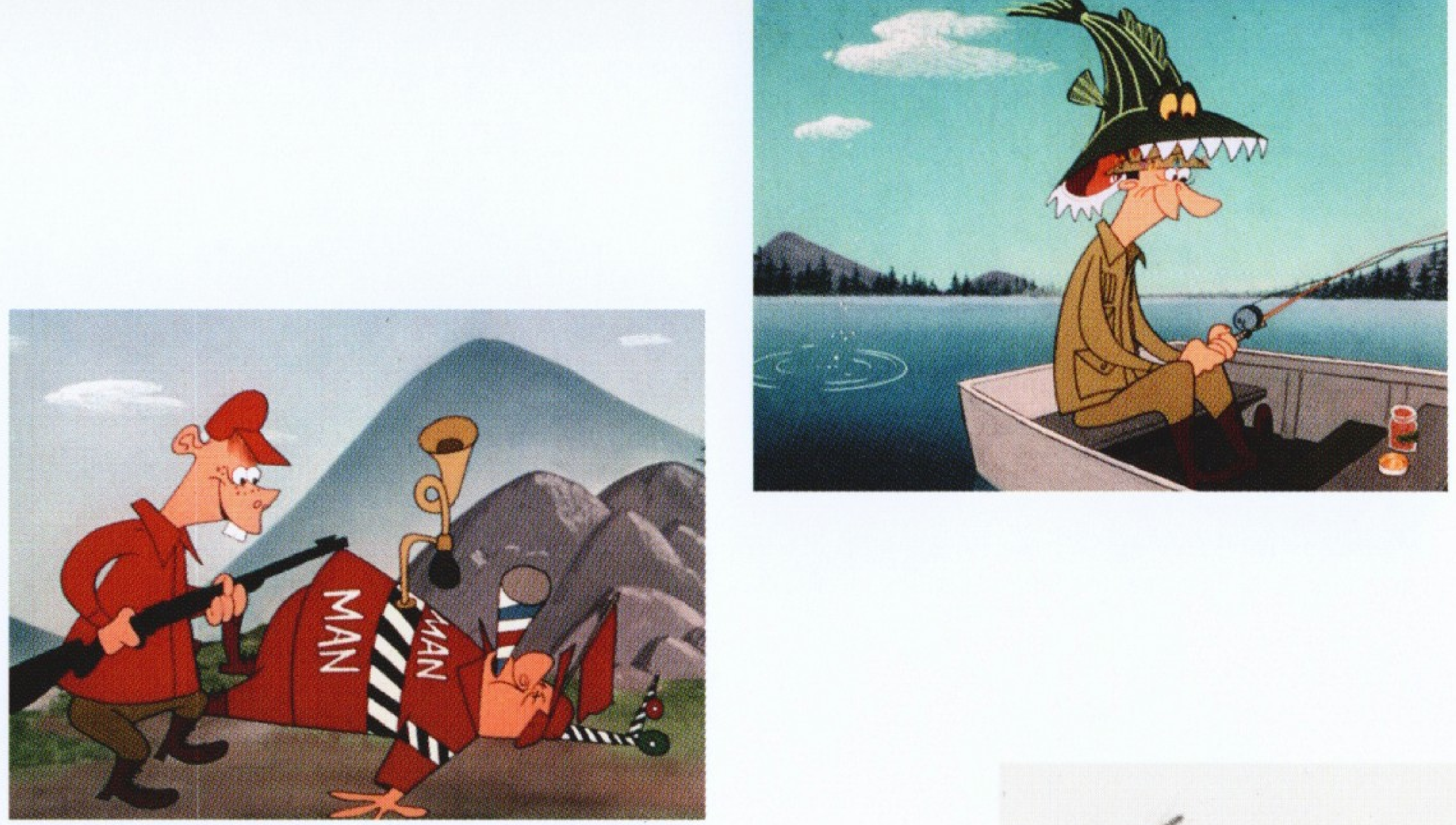




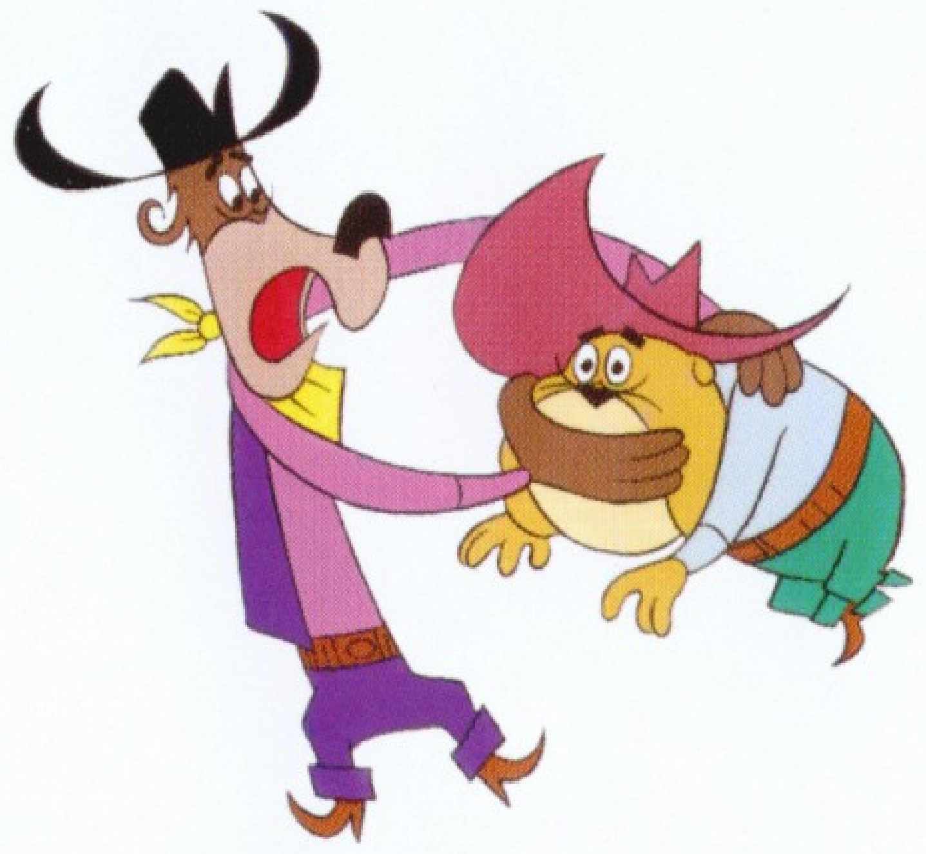

Symphony
in
SLANG
DIRECTED BY
Tex Avery

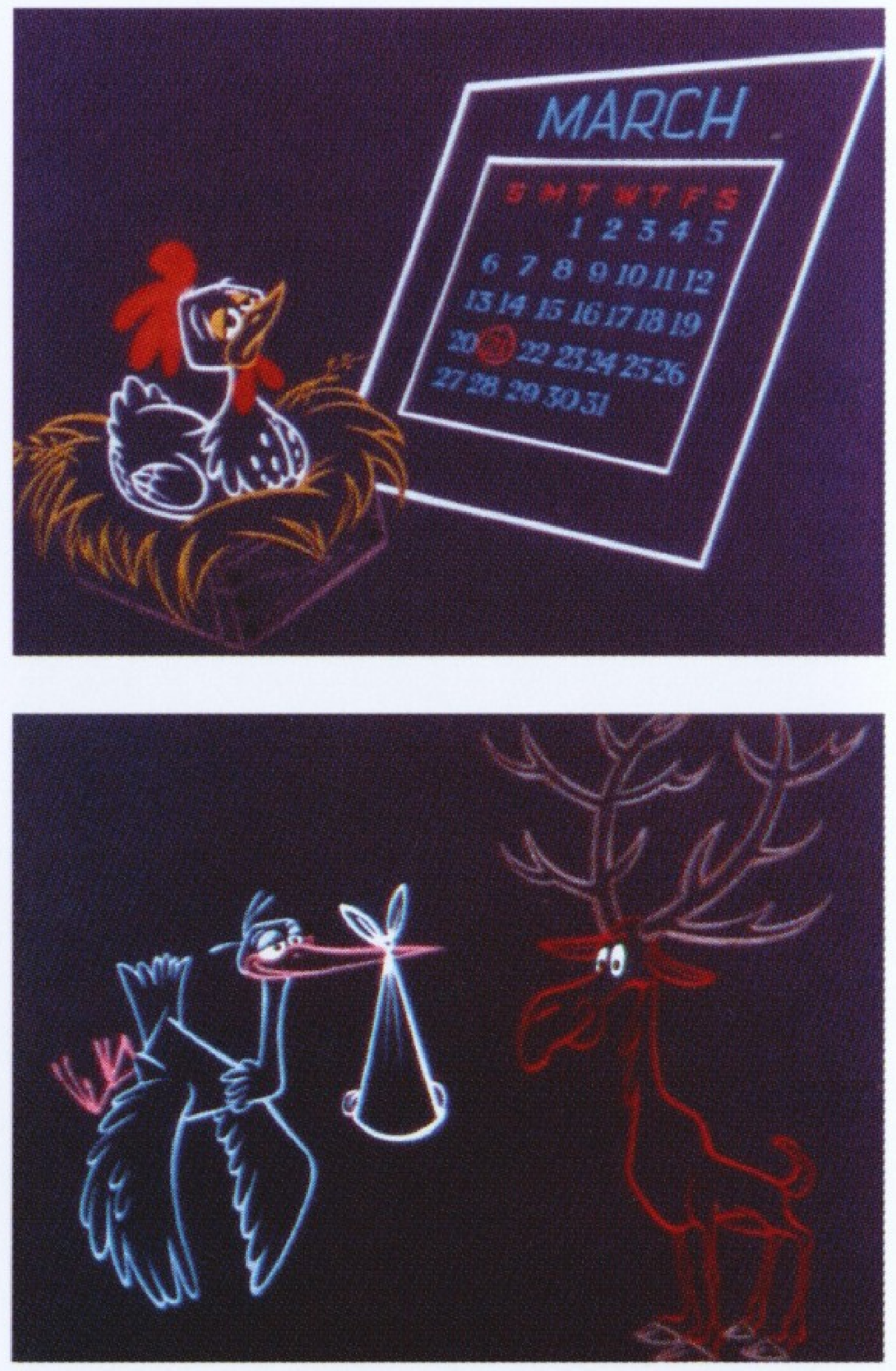


Symphony in Slang **(1951)**
Director: Tex Avery
Opposite: Layout drawing
by Tom Oreb
This page: Film stills



***Field and Scream* (1955)**
Director: Tex Avery
Film stills




MARCH
S M T W T F S
1 2 3 4 5
6 7 8 9 10 11 12
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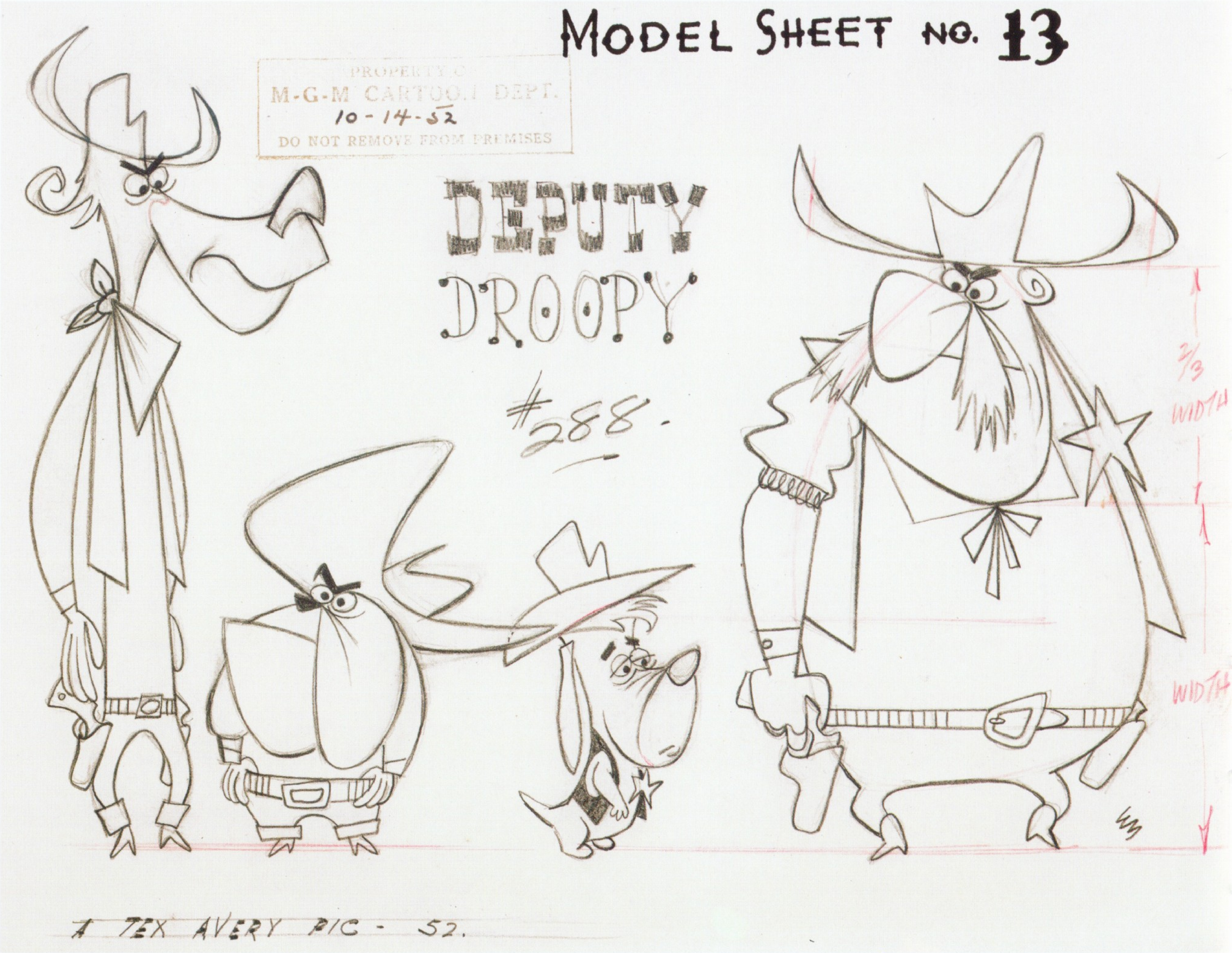
20 21 22 23 24 25 26
27 28 29 30 31

***Farm of Tomorrow* (1954)**
Director: Tex Avery
Film stills


MODEL SHEET NO. 13
PROPERTY OF
M-G-M CARTOON DEPT.
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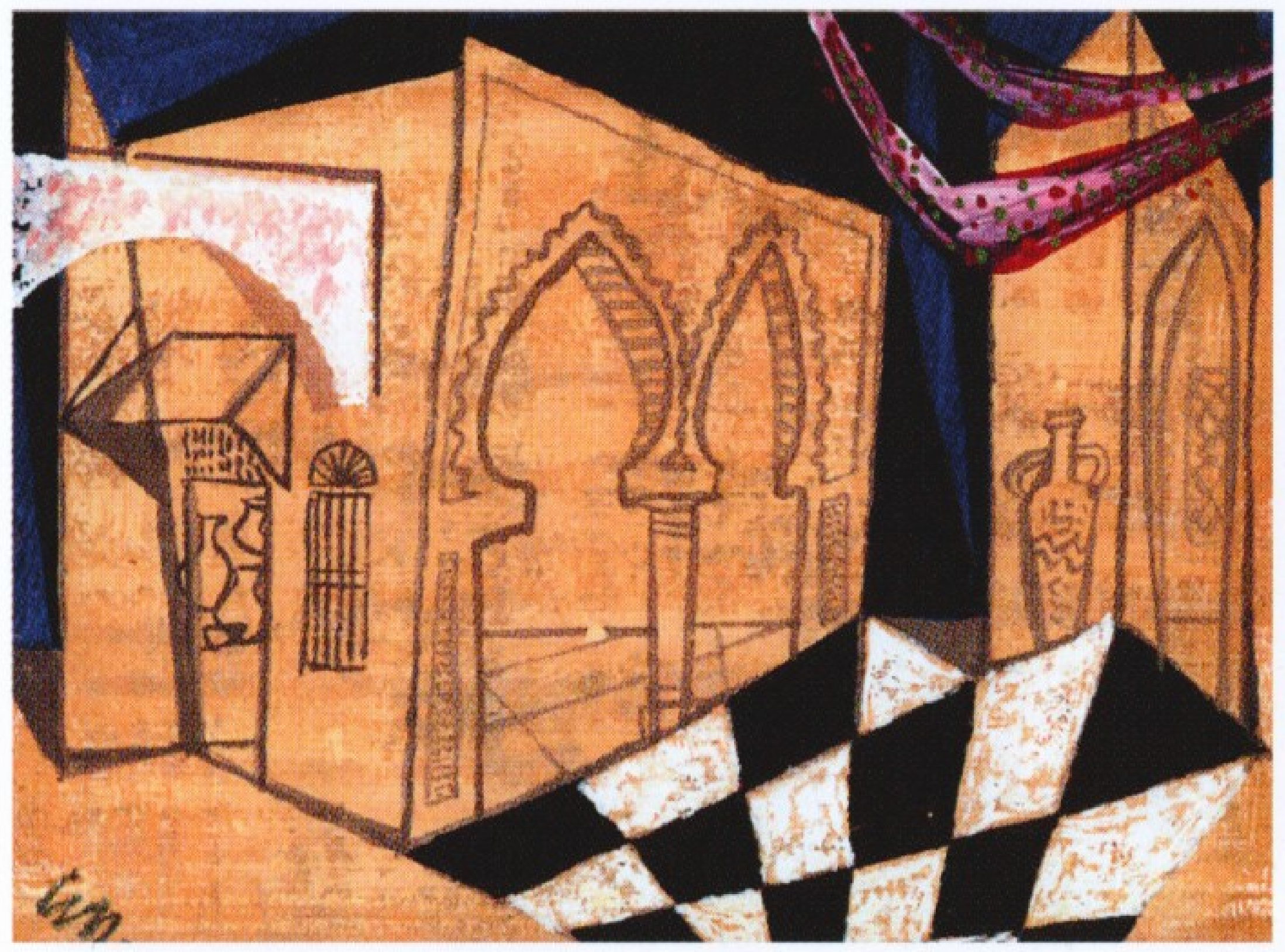
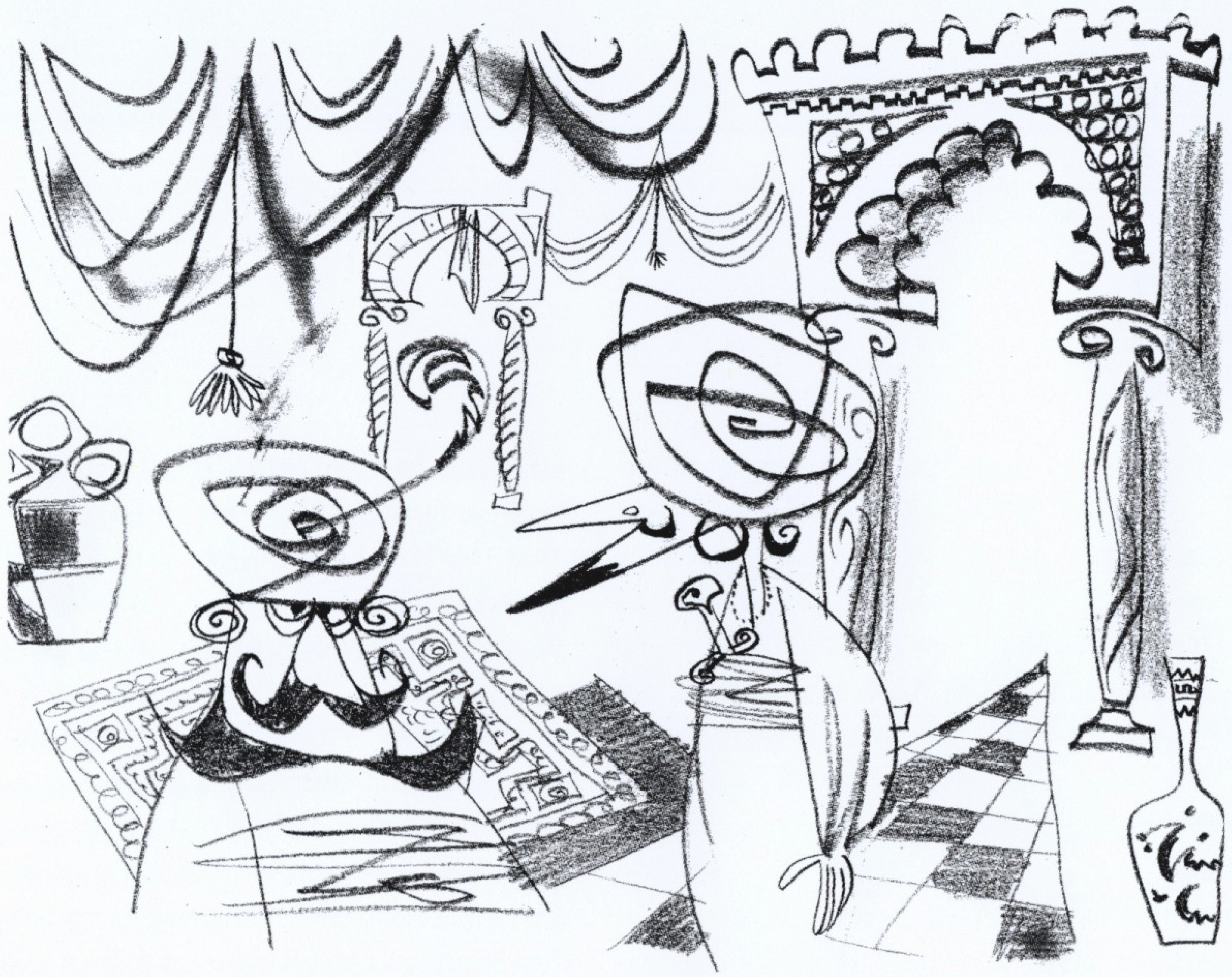
WIDTH
A TEX AVERY PIC - 52.

***Deputy Droopy* (1955)**
Director: Tex Avery
Top: Production cel
Above: Model sheet
by Ed Benedict

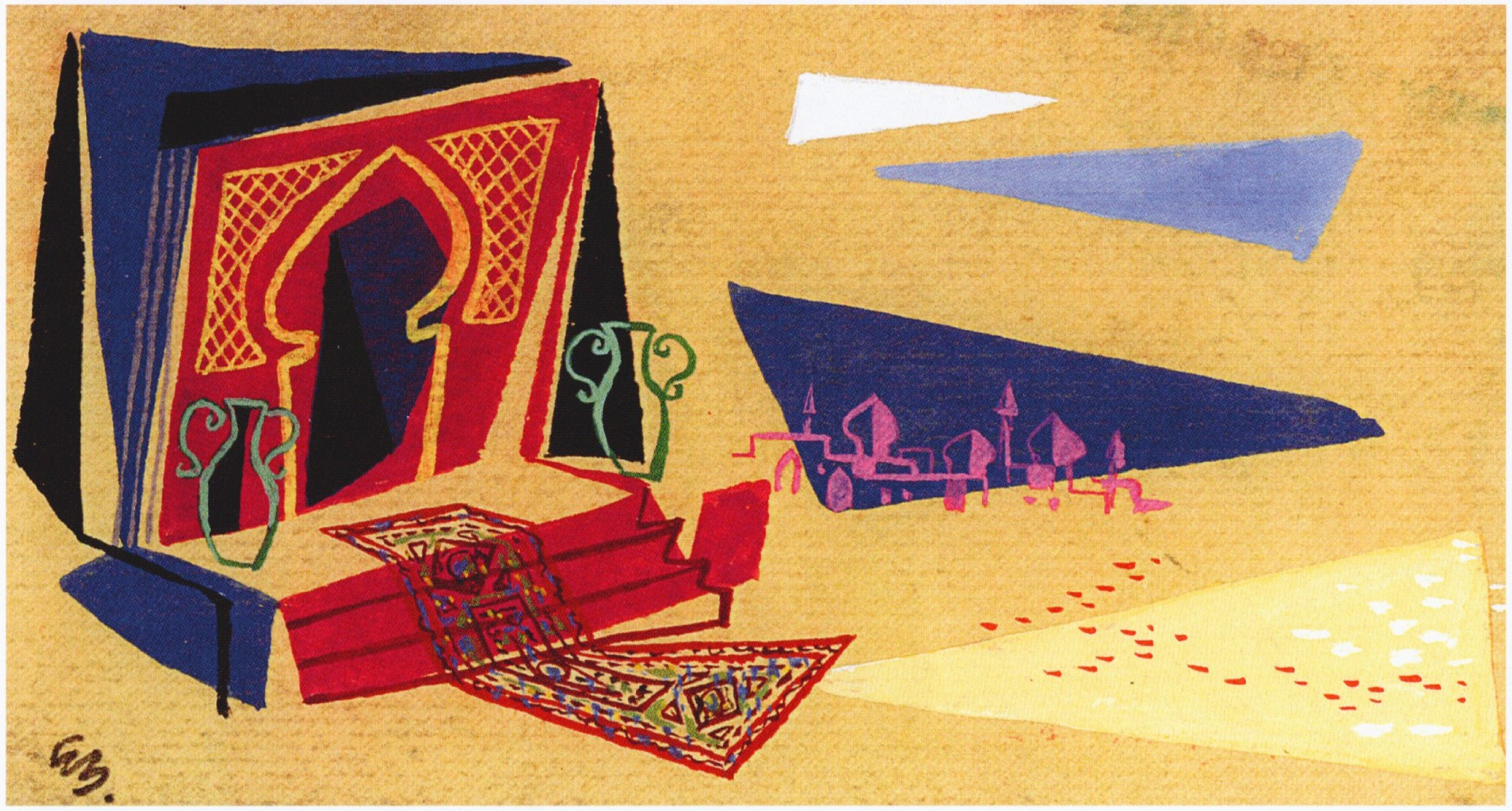




Invitation to the Dance

Both Ed Benedict and Gene Hazelton created modern styling approaches for the animated sequence of the MGM live-action musical *Invitation to the Dance*, but ultimately the film's producers pulled back, opting for a more conventional cartoon sequence. Benedict recalls his disappointment at the missed opportunity to create something special:

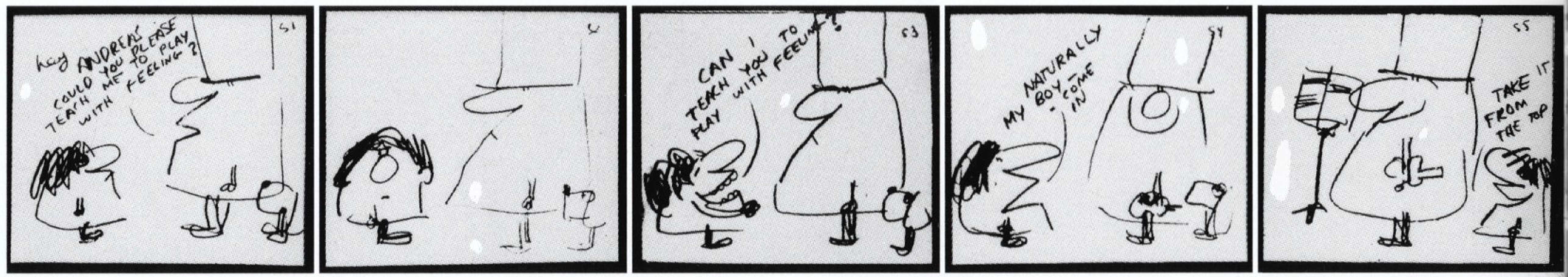
> *I was shocked because if you look at a lot of the old MGM musicals, they used Lautrec, Cézanne, and a lot of different styles of backgrounds, just great stuff. Gene Kelly is running the show more or less on those types of decisions and he's over there making the approvals on this stuff. There's samples coming from the art department on the main lot, others besides myself were handing in ideas, and nothing took place.*



Invitation to the Dance (1956)
Animation sequence directors:
Bill Hanna and Joe Barbera
Concept art by Ed Benedict

P

PINTOFF PRODUCTIONS

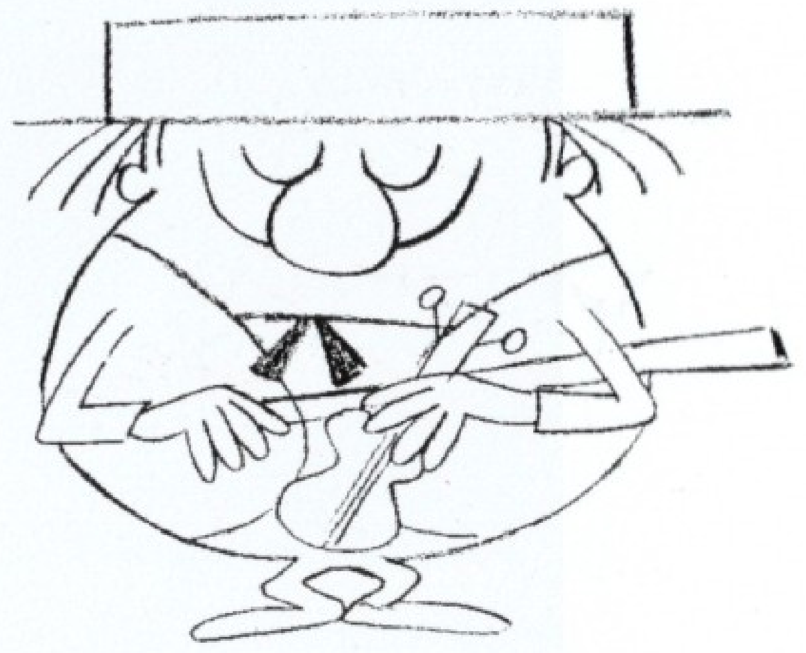

hey ANDREAS could you please teach me to play with feeling?
51
CAN I TEACH YOU TO PLAY WITH FEELING?
53
NATURALLY MY BOY — COME IN
54
TAKE IT FROM THE TOP
55

When Ernest Pintoff (1931–2002) opened his own commercial studio, Pintoff-Lawrence Productions, in 1957, he had been in the animation business only two short years. Though he had never animated, he was already a director. His animated cartoons have an unmistakable "Pintoff feel," with his characters' protruding poke-your-eye-out noses and goofy round teeth, but Pintoff wasn't necessarily interested in breaking new ground as a designer. For him, animation was personal—an outlet for exploring ideas and themes that went beyond the standard studio fare of cat-chasing-mouse. His personal approach is evidenced in the series of groundbreaking short films he produced independently in the late 1950s and early 1960s: *The Violinist* (1959), *The Interview* (1960), *The Old Man and the Flower* (1962), and *The Critic* (1963).

Pintoff was born in New York City and raised in Watertown, Connecticut. In grammar school, at the age of nine, he began playing the trumpet and later took up piano and cello. In high school, he acquired a taste for modern jazz and the works of Dizzy Gillespie, Miles Davis, and Charlie Parker. In spite of his musical savvy, Pintoff chose to study art at Syracuse University with the intention of becoming a magazine illustrator. He later received a graduate assistantship at Michigan State University, where he taught painting and design. His passion for art and jazz occasionally intersected in his school years, when he sold spot illustrations to jazz magazines like *Metronome* and *Downbeat*. Animation, however, was nowhere on his radar. He moved to Los Angeles in 1955 in hopes of teaching at the University of Southern California (USC), and while waiting for an opening, he took a temporary job at UPA. Pintoff quickly became enamored with the possibilities of moving art. "One of the reasons I left painting was that graphics was not enough; it's very limiting," Pintoff explained. "People interpret so many things from them that I feel it is a very personal thing and should be kept on that level. It can't be popularized and shouldn't be. That's what I like about film: it's a popular medium that many people are moved by."

At UPA, Pintoff was partnered with experimental filmmaker John Whitney and designer-animator Fred Crippen, and together their unit created numerous shorts for the CBS series *The Boing Boing Show*. Following the cancellation of UPA's television series, Pintoff accepted a job offer from Gene Deitch to direct at the revived Terrytoons in New Rochelle, New York. His tenure there was brief, lasting only a few months in 1956, but resulted in Pintoff's first truly personal film, *Flebus*. Pintoff left Terrytoons when New York commercial producer Robert Lawrence offered him his own studio, and Pintoff-Lawrence Productions was opened in 1957. Shortly thereafter, he went solo with Pintoff Productions. Pintoff's clean graphic look and fresh designs were an instant hit in the world of TV advertising, and he attracted clients such as Tip Top Bread, Lucky Strike Cigarettes, Norelco, Renault, and the American Cancer Society. Despite his Madison Avenue success, Pintoff didn't particularly take to the commercial world: "There's absolutely no creative freedom there at all," he once said. "It's a business, the financing client has the final say and that's it."

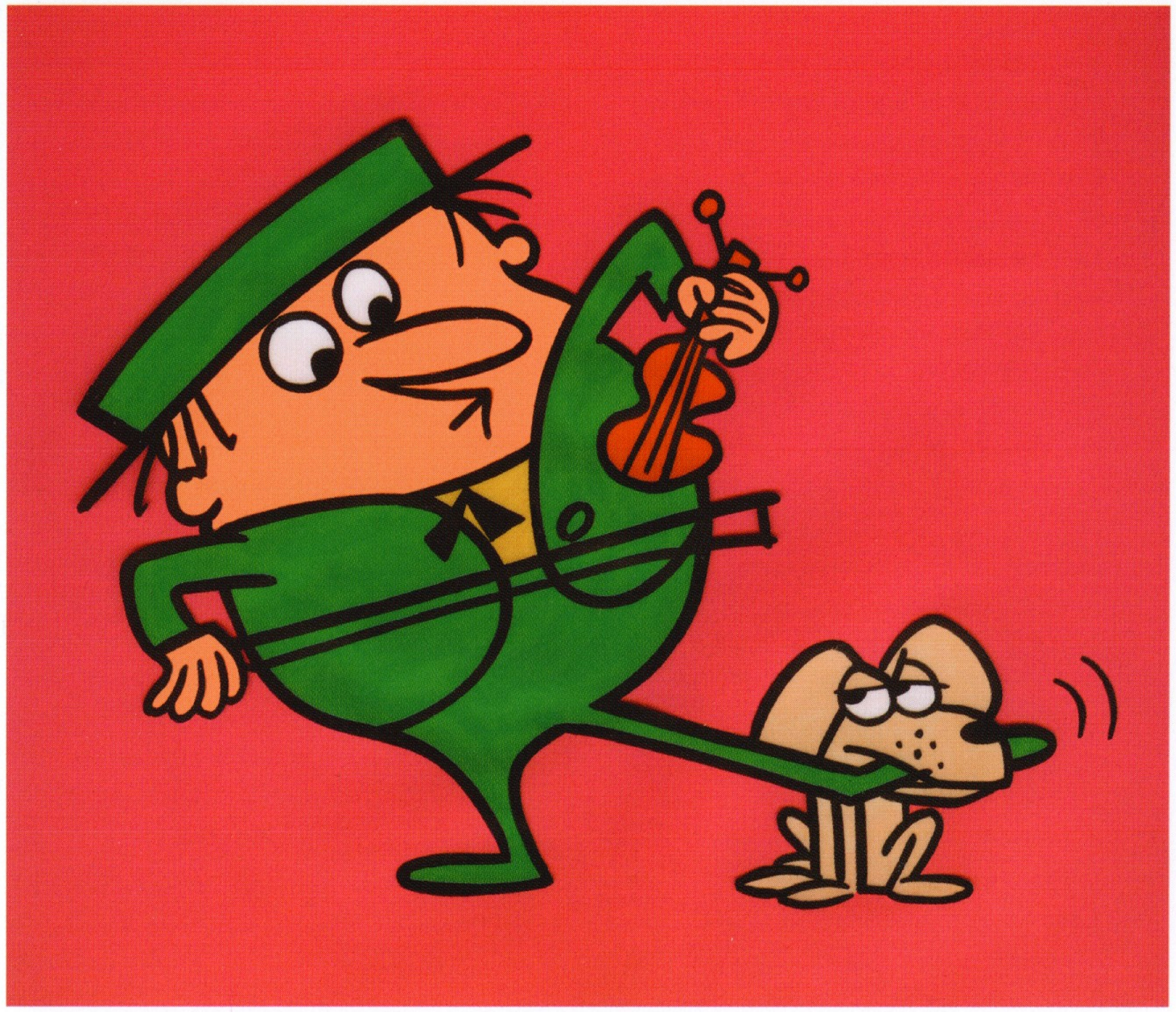
Pintoff used the profits from his commercials to finance the production of independent shorts where he could combine style with a personal viewpoint. With the exception of John Hubley, few other industry artists in the late 1950s had dared to venture into the world of independent animation. Pintoff's first independent film, *The Violinist* (1959), designed by himself and Jimmy Murakami, earned an Oscar nomination and won a BAFTA (the British Academy of Film and Television Arts' equivalent of

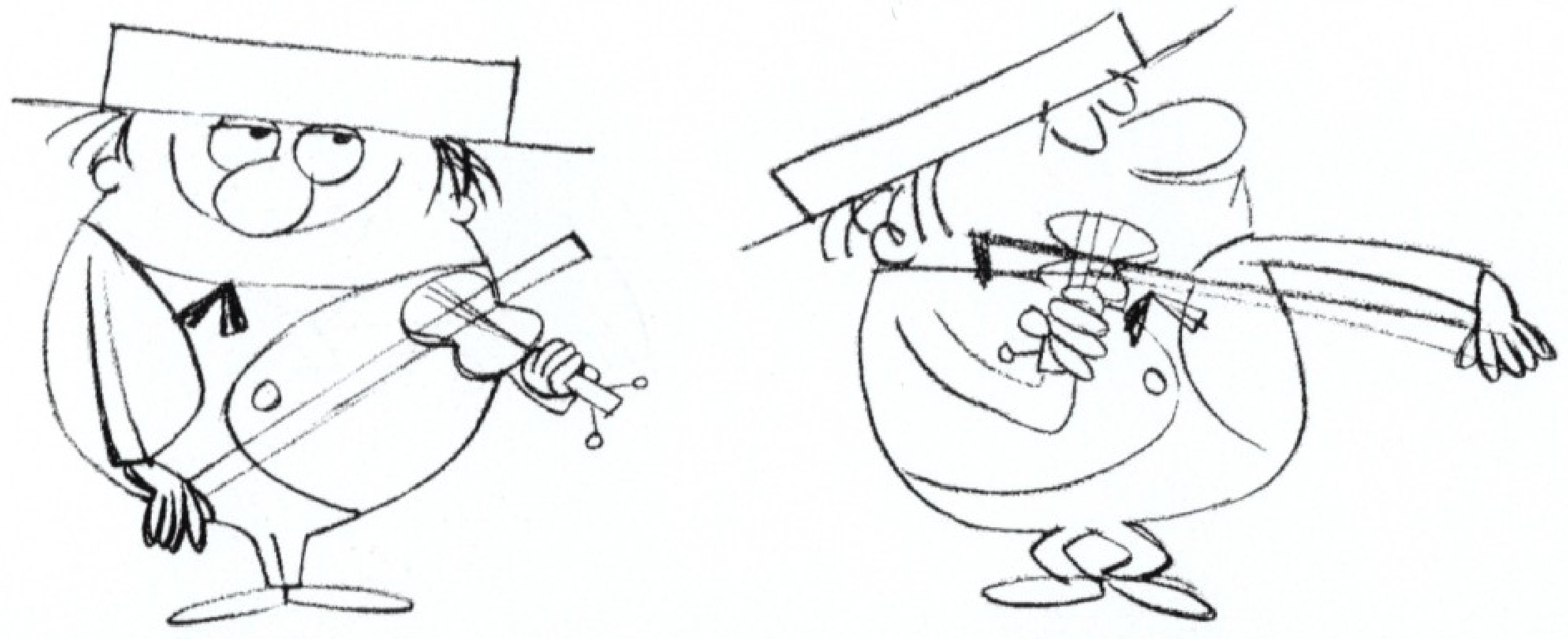


56
NOT FROM THE BOTTOM THE TOP
57
SORRY MR FILLINGER
58
RRR
59
SON— YOU PLAY WITH NO FEELING
60
I TOLD YOU HARRY
TO PLAY WITH FEELING ONE MUST SUFFER —
61
SUFFER— ~~SEFFER~~
62
YEAH SUFFER
YES
Harry was prepared to suffer.
So he gave up devouring bear meat in the subway,
64
bird-chasing. . .
WOOF
JABBER JABBER JABBER
63
shaving. . .

the Oscar). The film features one of the recurring motifs in Pintoff's films—the "poor soul" character, a "lonely, grubby kind of character, who is always struggling to communicate and find love." He explains that the genesis for this character type came from "my own personal struggles as an artist. I was in psychoanalysis at that time, and I was dealing with the whole question of whether psychoanalysis would affect my art or alter my spontaneity. Ultimately, the violinist remains happy and grubby, so I guess the answer to that question is to remain as you are." In the early 1960s, Pintoff left animation to pursue a career as a live-action feature and television series director. His drawing style, though eye-catching, was noticeably limited, and his disinterest in the actual animation process limited his opportunities in the field. Pintoff alluded to his search for a broader filmmaking canvas in an early 1960s *Film Culture* interview: "I like to think of myself as a filmmaker, neither animator nor a humorist. It just happens that a lot of what I've done is humorous but I'm interested in a variety of things. Not really in animation as a medium but in the art form of film. Animation is just one way I can express myself."

Leonard Glasser (b. 1935) was one of Ernie Pintoff's closest collaborators in the late 1950s and early 1960s. He designed Pintoff's short films *The Interview* and *The Old Man and the Flower* and collaborated on the scripts for Pintoff's early live-action efforts like *The Shoes* (1962). Besides their uncannily similar cartooning styles, Glasser also shared in common with Pintoff a love of jazz. Glasser had been playing drums professionally in the Philadelphia area since high school. "I was working my way through college playing drums," Glasser recalls. "It was my life. I wanted to be a jazz musician." Glasser received a diploma from the Philadelphia Museum School of Art in





THE VIOLINIST (1959)
Director: Ernest Pintoff
Top: Part of Pintoff's storyboard for the film
Above: Production cel
Left: Character layout drawings based on Jimmy Murakami's finalized design

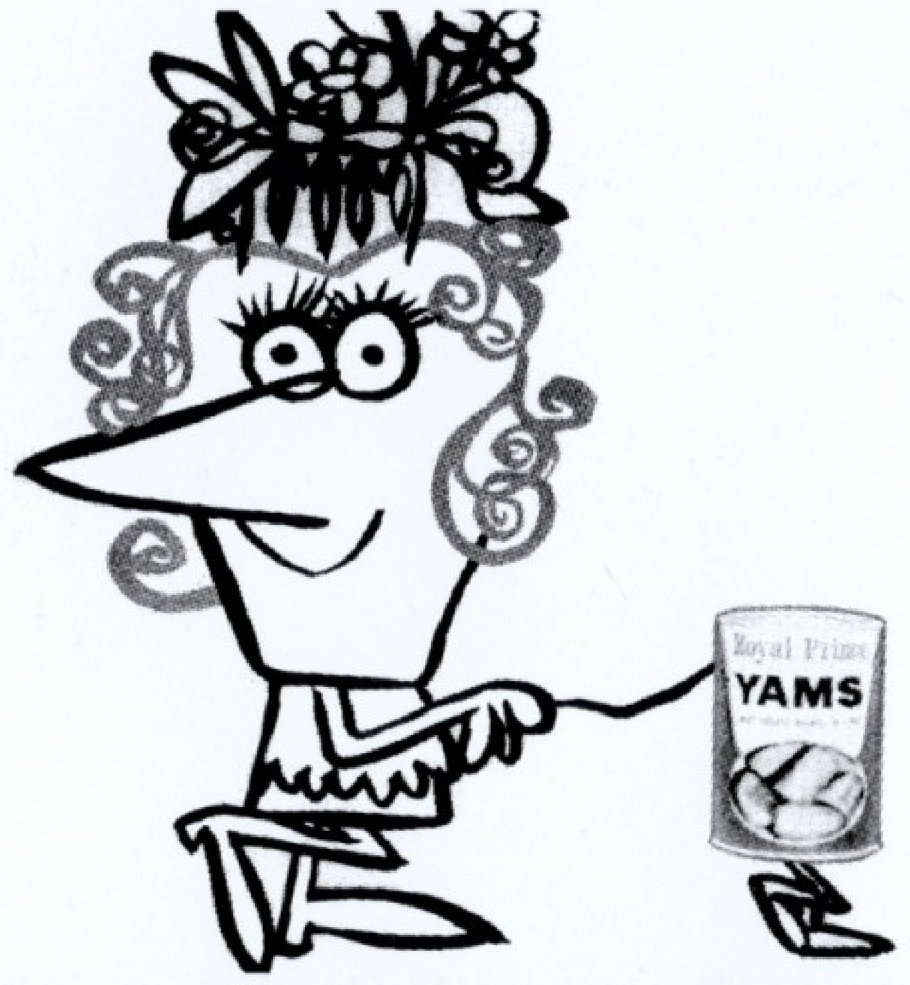
1956, where he had studied with painters Melville Price and Franz Kline and designers Armin Hoffman and S. Neil Fujita. He had first encountered Pintoff's work during a screening of UPA films at their school. Pintoff's *AWounded Bird*, a short produced for *The Boing Boing Show*, was screening in the program. Glasser recalls the eye-opening revelation of discovering this cartoon:

> *At the time, I was crazy about two cartoonists that I had learned about in art school—Saul Steinberg and André Francois. That was the style I was trying to emulate, and then I saw Ernie's style, which was even more simplified and direct. There was this blues soundtrack by one of my favorite musicians, Shorty Rogers, and Ernie had made the dumbest pictures illustrating this music that I ever saw. I was into dumb at the time, the dumber the better. So here's this great tragedy: a bird flies into a tree because it's stupid, and then these kids pick it up and nurse it back to health. [It was] the best cartoon I'd ever seen in my life.*

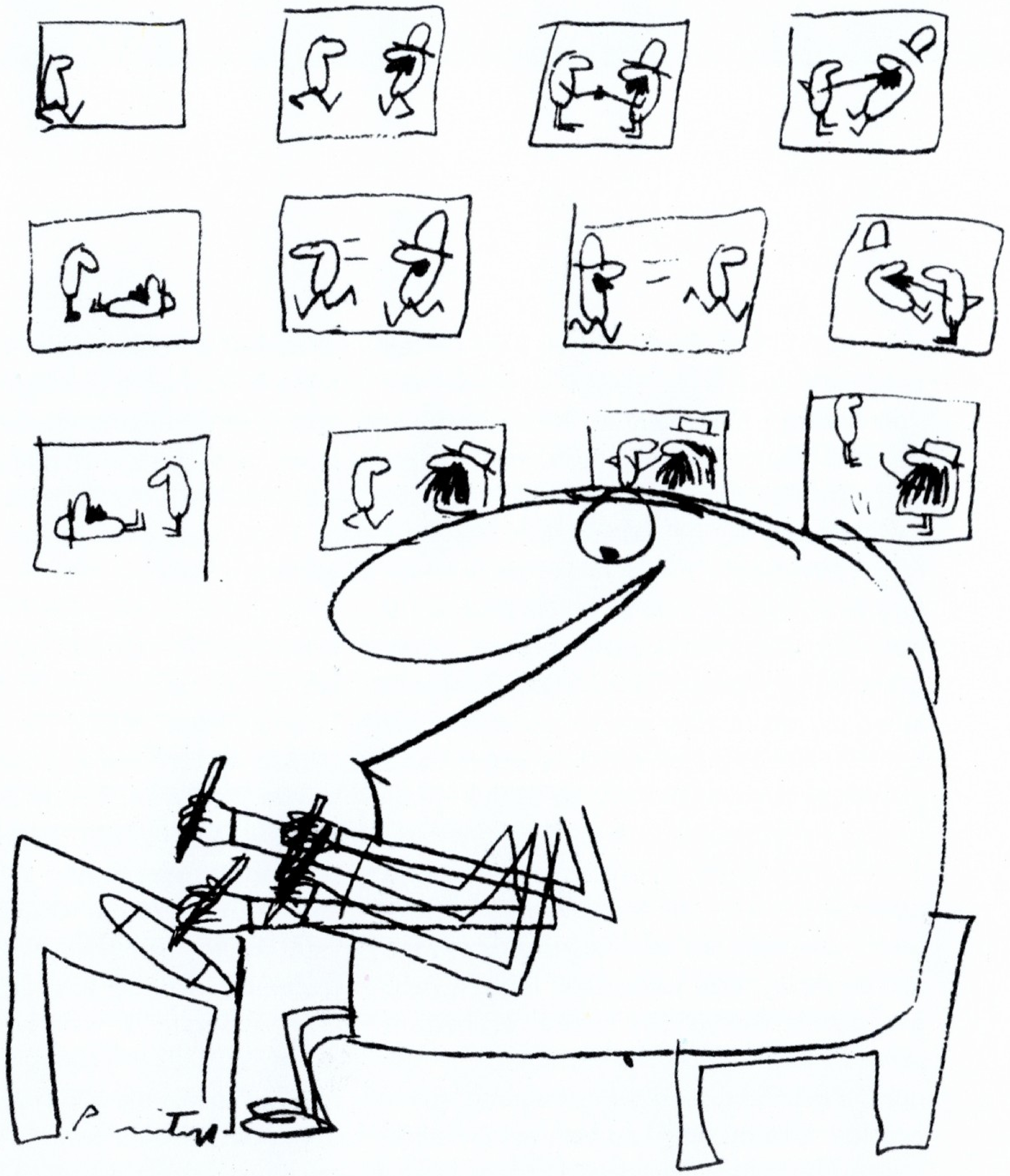
During a visit to New York, Glasser received an invitation from Robert Lawrence to meet Pintoff, who had just started Pintoff-Lawrence Productions. He explains his first encounter with Pintoff:

> *The studio was on 52nd street, right next to the Three Deuces, where Charlie Parker had played. Pintoff was upstairs from a club, in a brownstone. 52nd street in those days was the ground zero of jazz—Three Deuces, Hickory House, Birdland was right around the corner, all the great jazz clubs. So just to even be on that street was like blowing my mind. And I go meet Ernie Pintoff and he looks like a trombone player; he's got a big moustache. So I said, "You don't play trombone?" He says, "Nah, I play trumpet, man." And he picked up a trumpet and he started playing. He played like Shorty Rogers. He was great! The storyboard for* The Violinist *was on the wall. I'm looking at it and it looks like I drew it. I mean, the drawing style was my style. And Ernie looks at my portfolio and he goes, "Yeah man, you're . . . uh . . . very . . . it's good, man." That's the way he talked. He was like [Shorty Petterstein from]* The Interview.

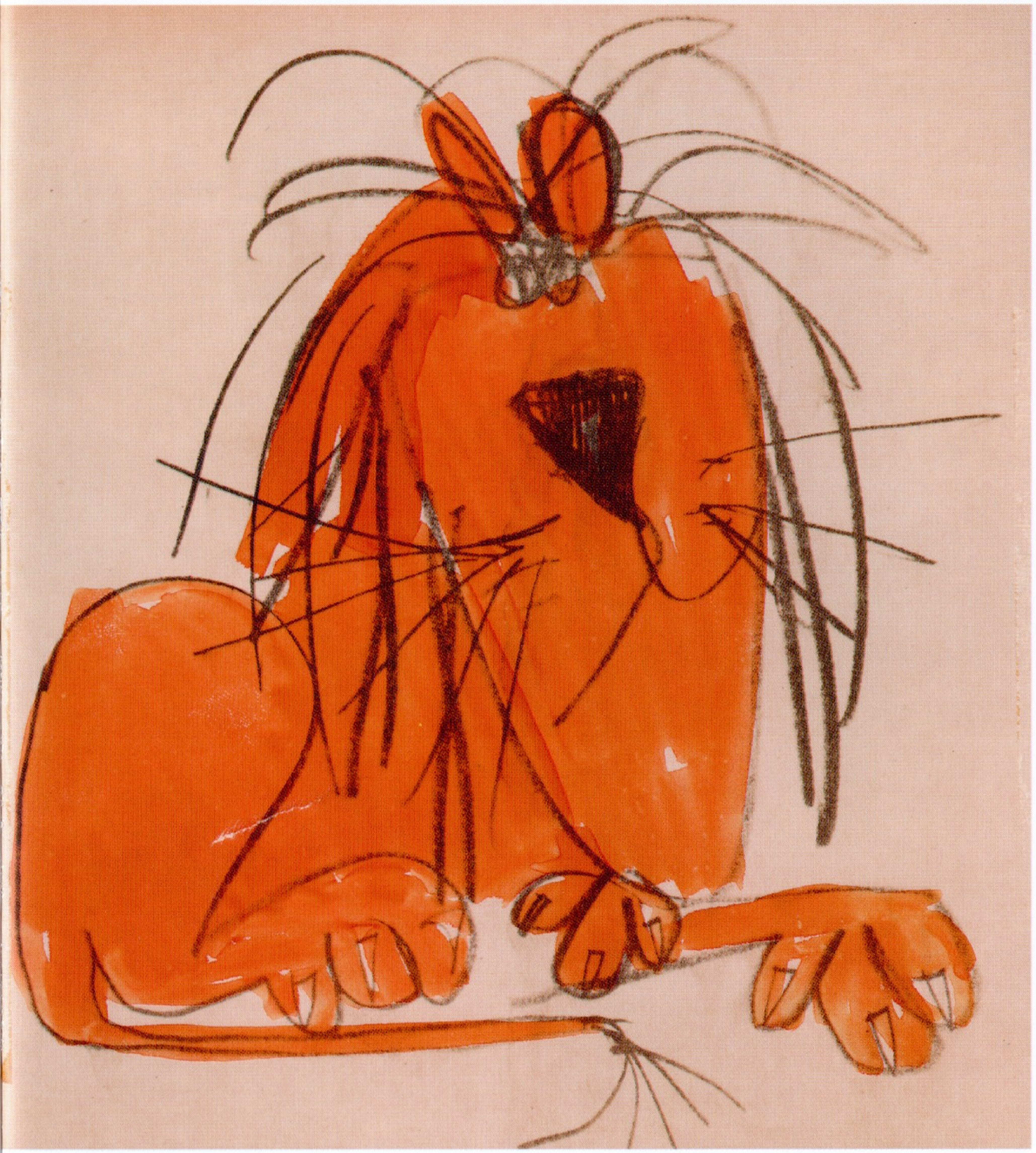
Glasser began working on a freelance basis for Pintoff shortly after their meeting. He also worked a stint at Terrytoons on the *Tom Terrific* TV series before joining the Pintoff studio full time in the late 1950s. They were kindred minds in more ways than their fondness for jazz and super-simple cartooning styles: Glasser also followed a similar career path to Pintoff's, opening his own animation studio—Stars & Stripes Productions Forever—in 1962, before branching out into live action in the mid-1960s. Today, Glasser continues to work in both animation and live action.



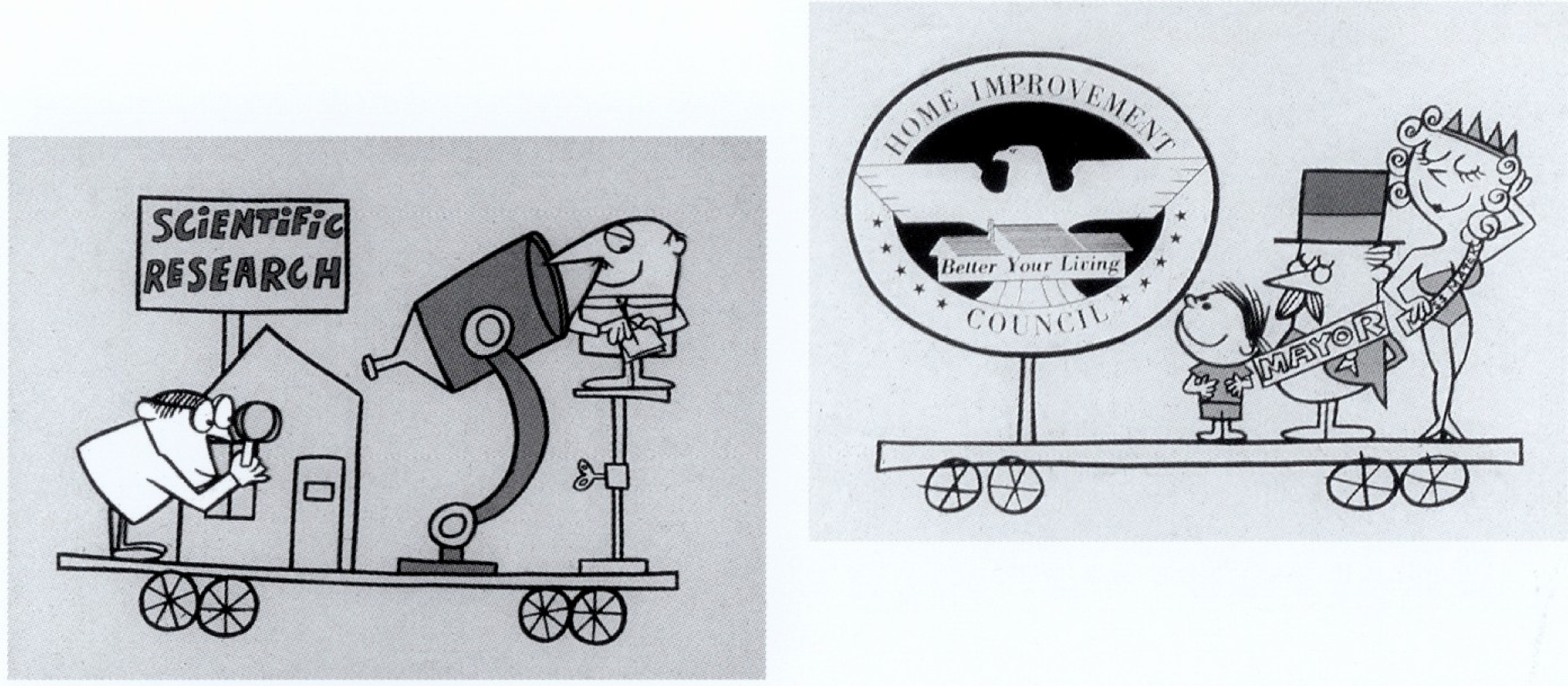
ROYAL PRINCE YAMS COMMERCIAL
Designer: Len Glasser



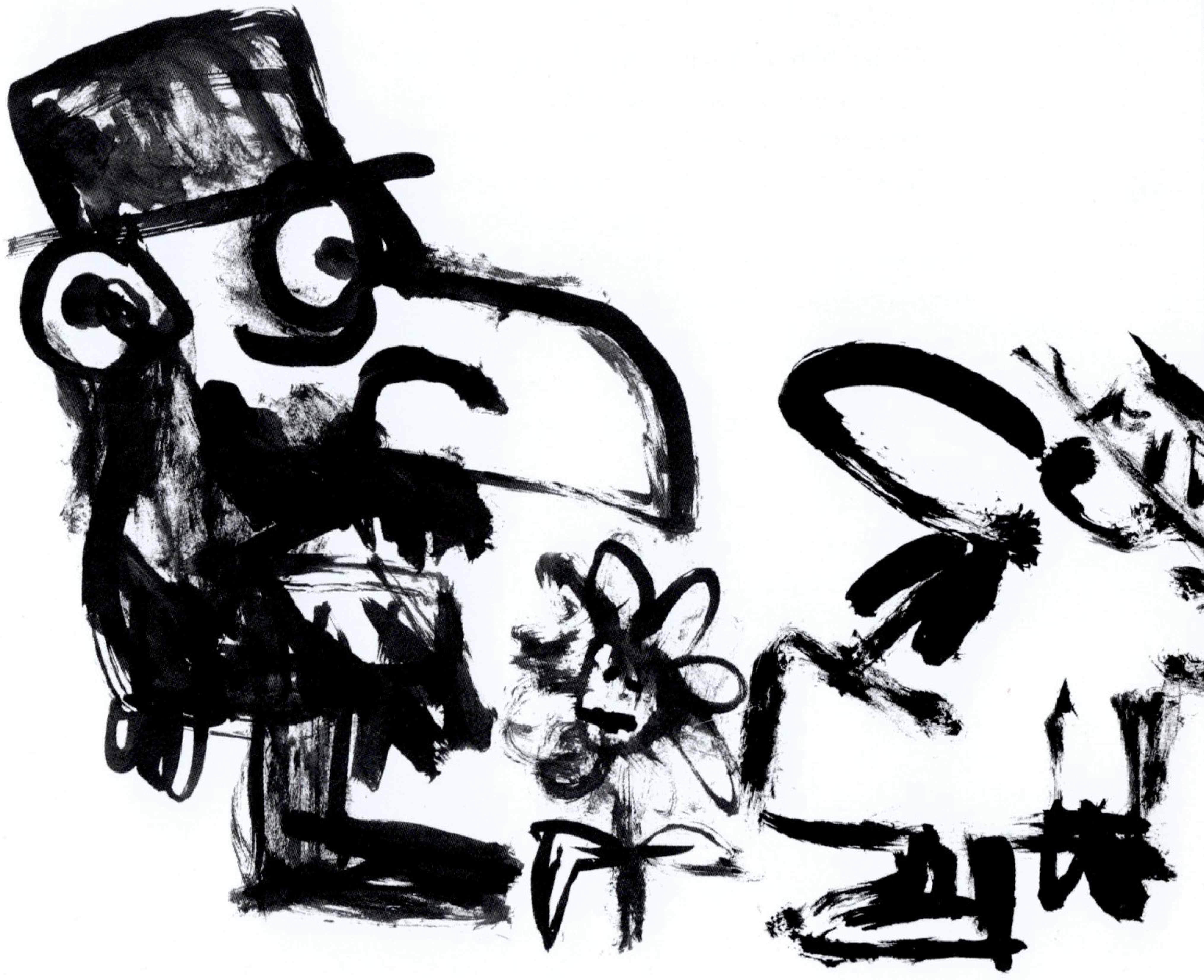
A sketch by
Ernest Pintoff.



Character design by Len Glasser.


SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
HOME IMPROVEMENT
Better Your Living
COUNCIL
MAYOR

Home Improvement Council commercial
Designer: Len Glasser



***The Old Man and the Flower* (1962)**
Director: Ernest Pintoff

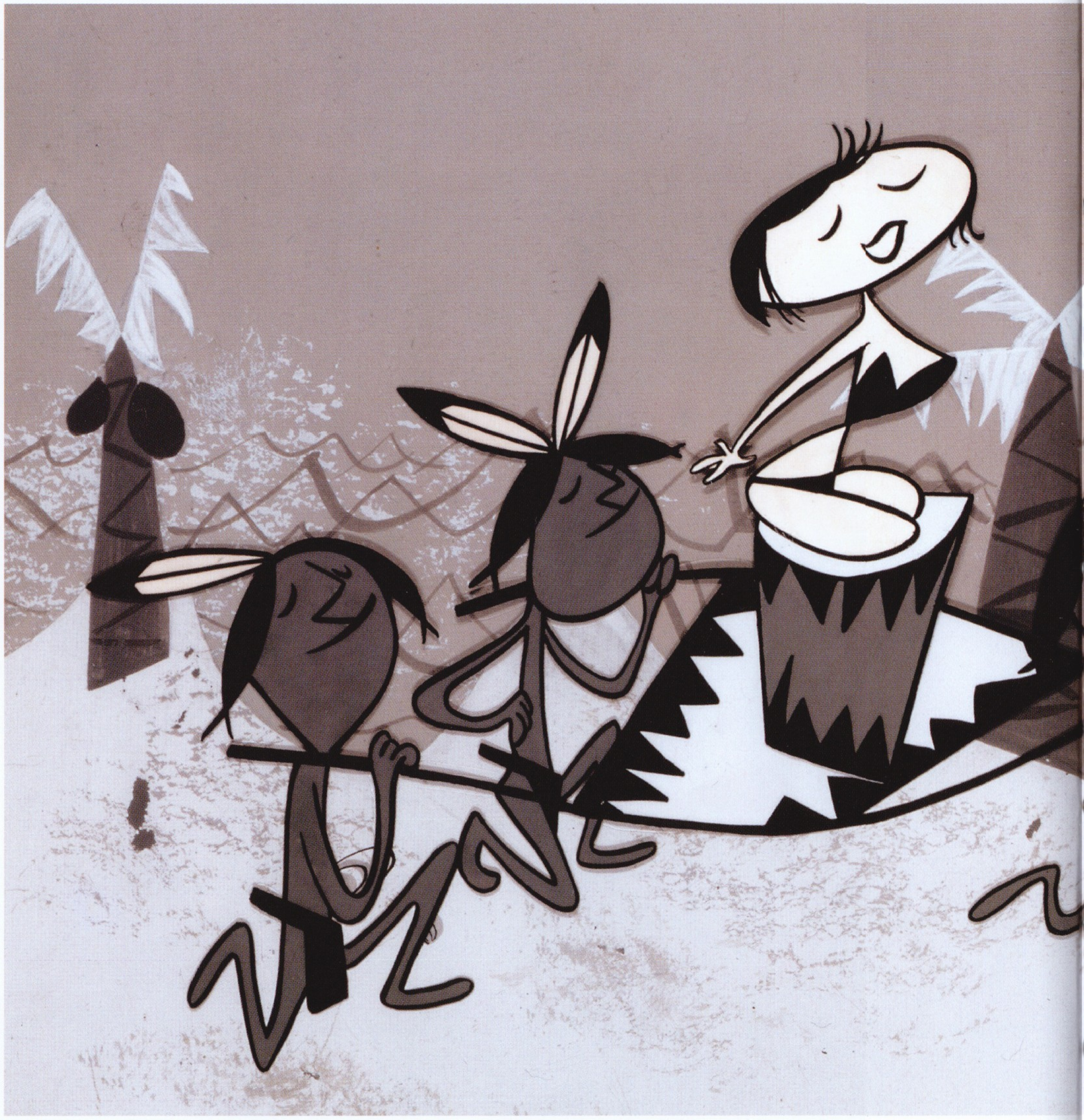
Though this short was produced in the early 1960s, it is a progression of Pintoff and Len Glasser's styles from the previous decade. In this concept sketch by Glasser, the strong graphic shapes of 1950s design are combined with a grubbier, more painterly rendering style.

P

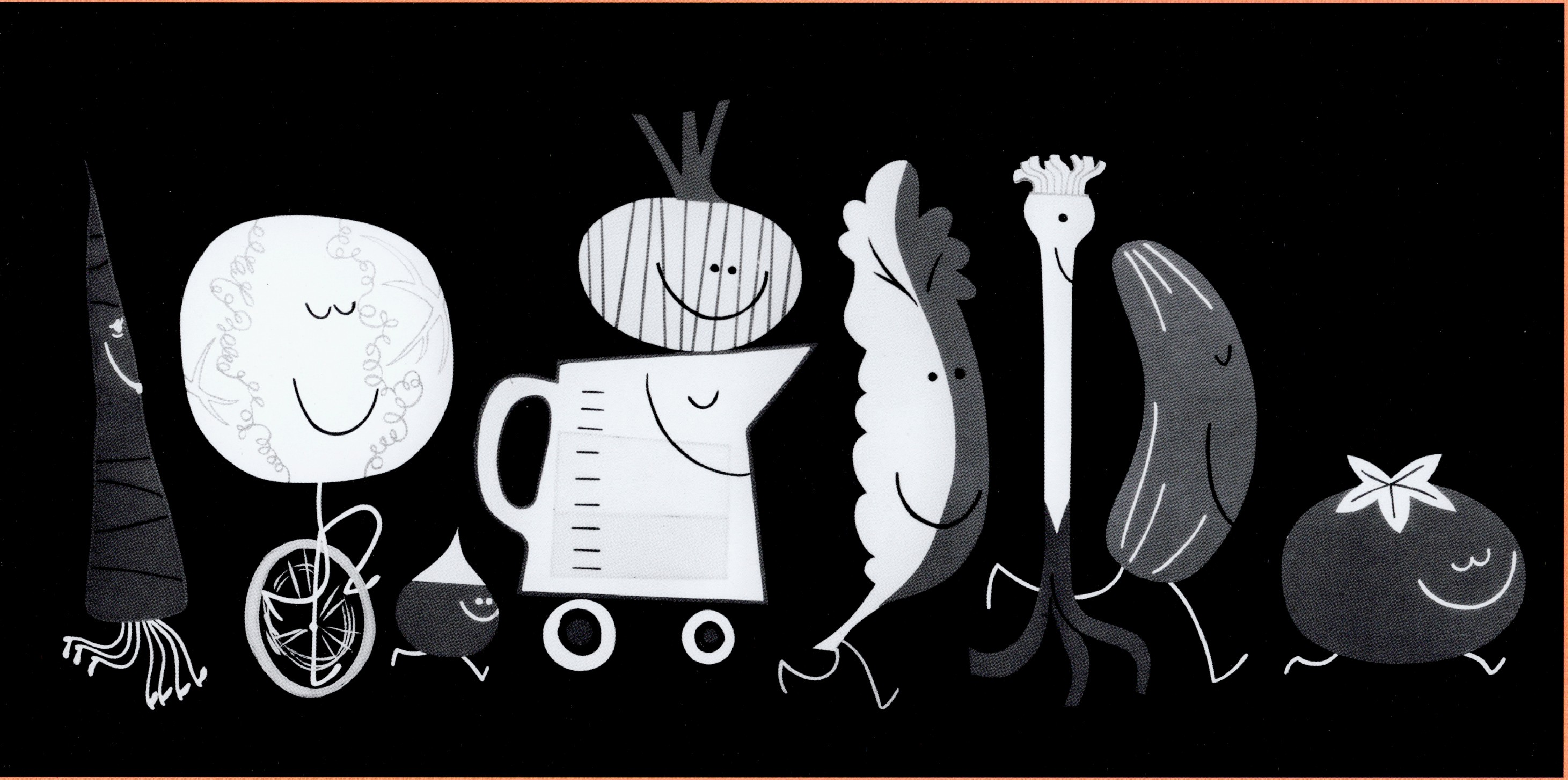
PLAYHOUSE PICTURES

Playhouse Pictures was founded in 1952 by Adrian Woolery (1909–1992). He began his animation career in 1936 as a camera operator at Disney and also served as UPA's production manager and cameraman before establishing Playhouse Pictures. The studio grew steadily throughout the 1950s, and by the end of the decade, it was positioned as one of the busiest and most successful TV commercial animation studios in Los Angeles. The Playhouse output might best be described as mainstream modern. It was driven by a desire to entertain and less concerned with making graphic statements. Woolery described his studio's approach to commercial filmmaking as an attempt to "blend modern animated characters, design and music in comic situations that would light-sell commercial products on television."

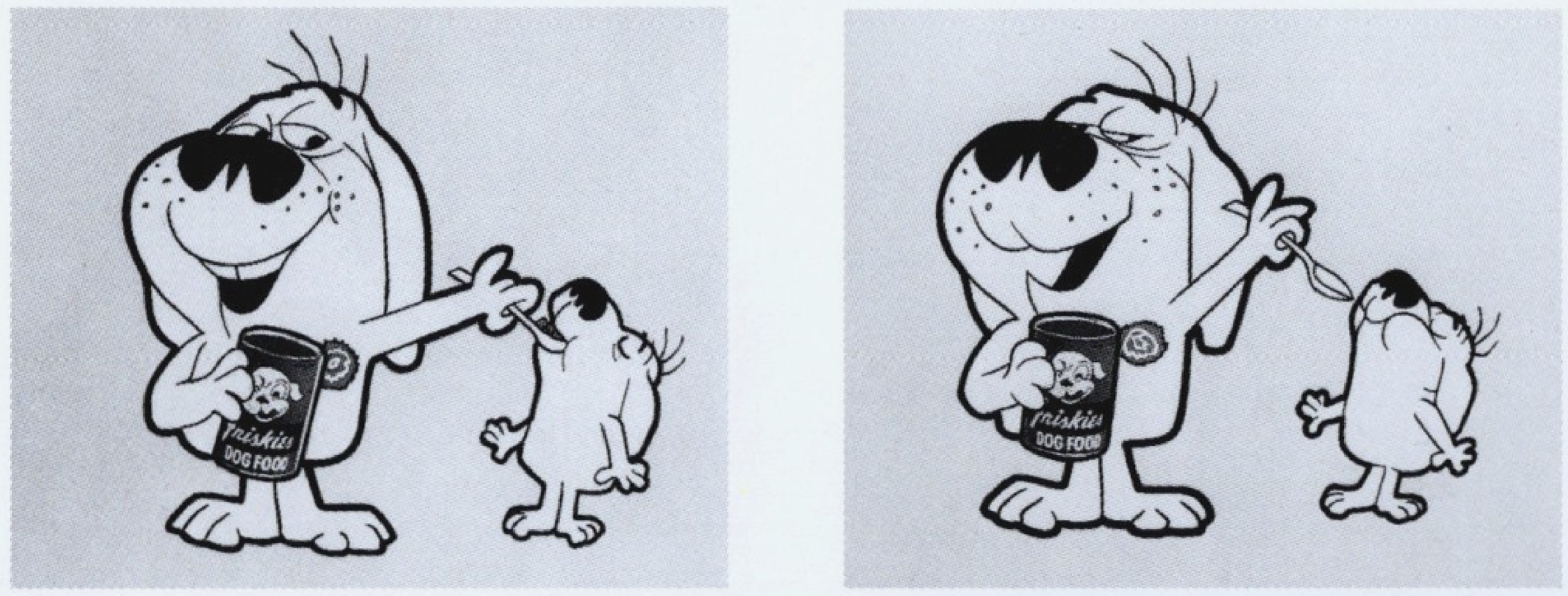
From the mid-1950s through 1964, Bill Melendez (b. 1916) was the primary animation director at Playhouse Pictures, and his impact is felt heavily in the studio's output. Melendez had previously been a top animator at both Warner Bros. and UPA, and when he came to Playhouse, he fused the defining elements of each of his previous employers: the slapstick and spirited Warner Bros. animation style and the inventive graphic movement of UPA cartoons. He recruited like-minded animators who understood the balance he wanted between humor and stylization, and throughout the 1950s, some of the most creative animators in the business worked at Playhouse, including Emery Hawkins, Bobe Cannon (who also directed at Playhouse), Bill Littlejohn, Rod Scribner, Herman Cohen, Frank Smith, and Phil Duncan.

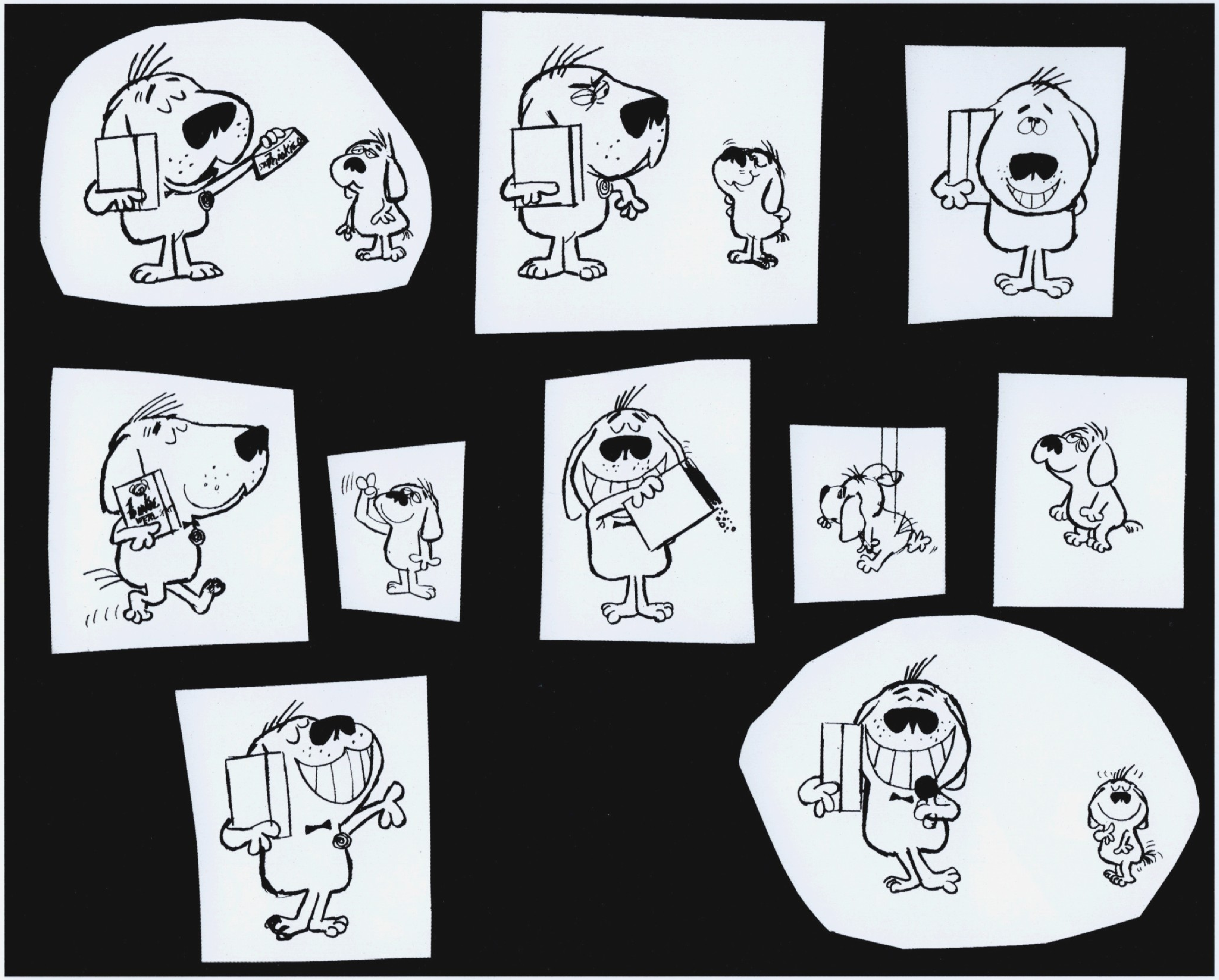


COPPERTONE SUNTAN LOTION COMMERCIAL
Designer unknown

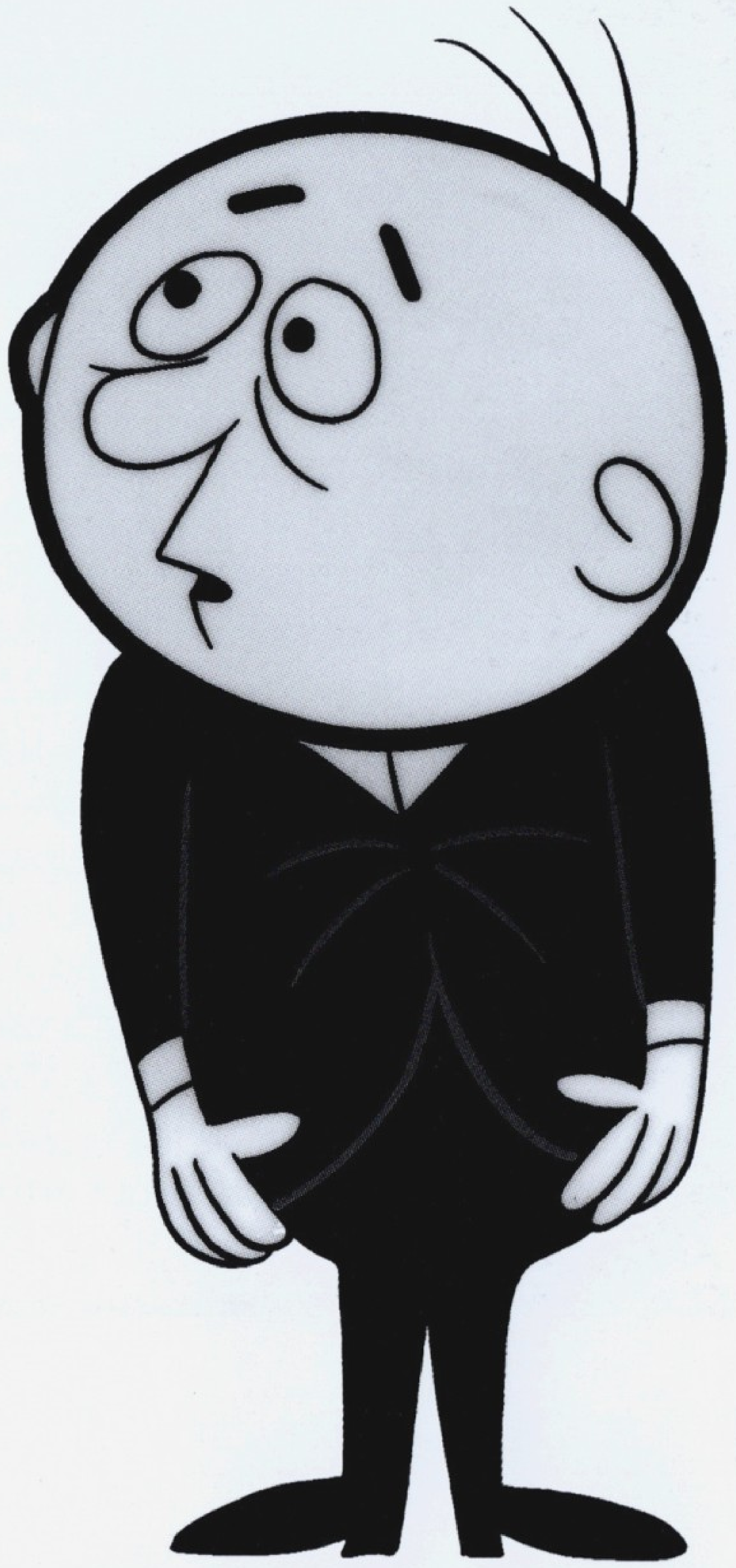


Heinz commercial
Designer unknown

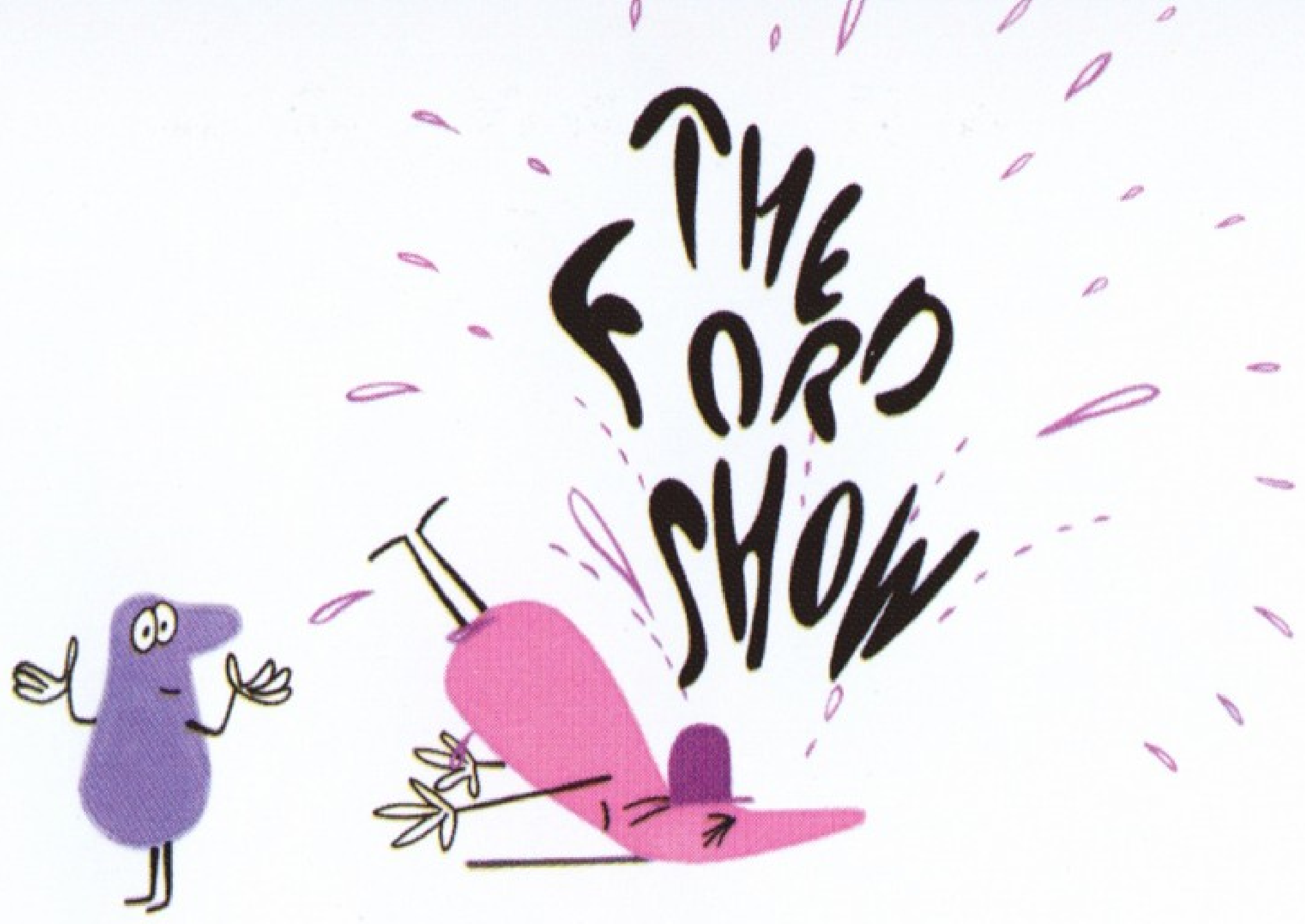

friskies
DOG FOOD
friskies
DOG FOOD



Friskies Dog Food commercial
Designer: Bernard Gruver
Top: Film stills
Above: Model sheet by Gruver



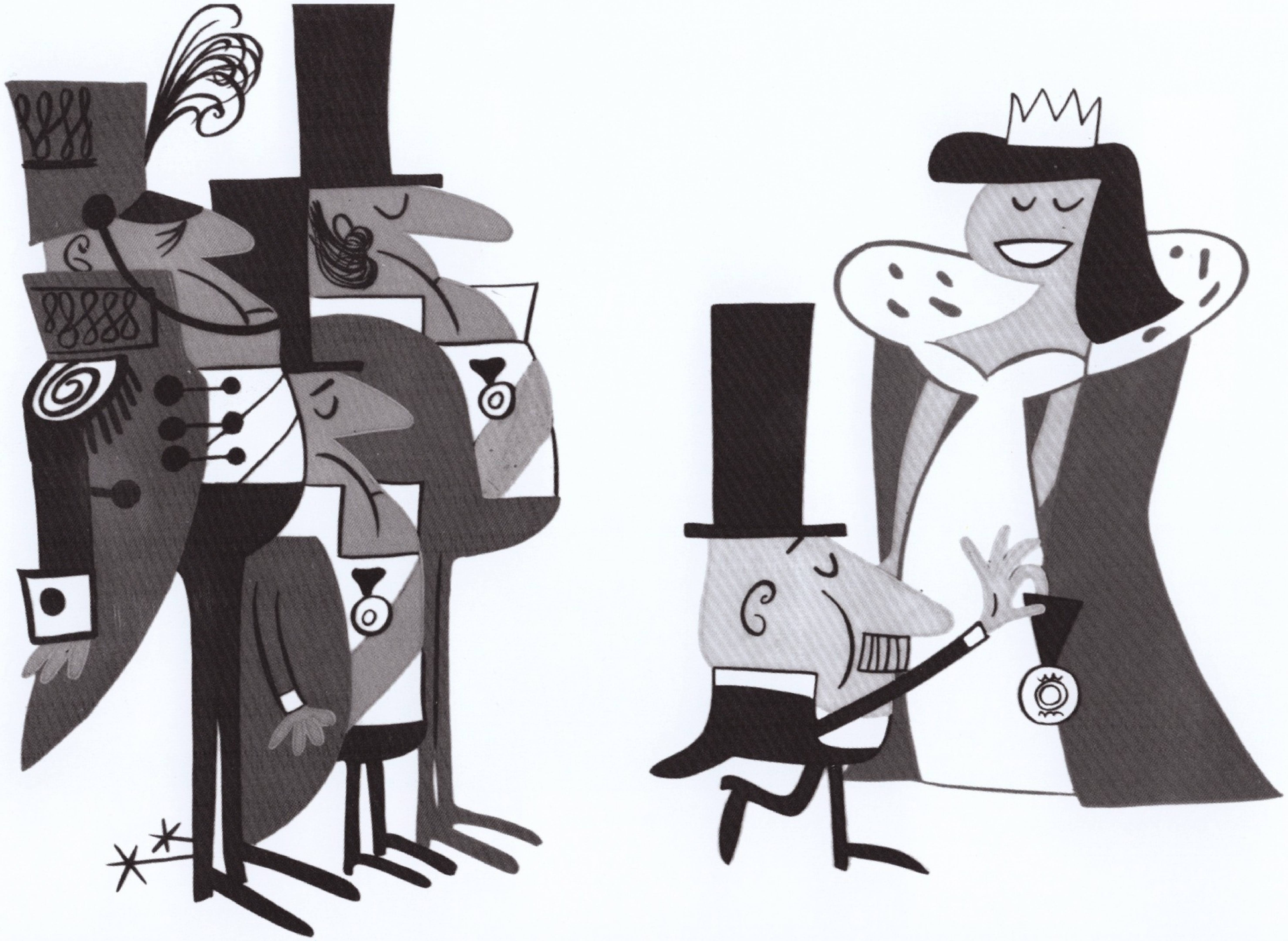
Burgermeister Beer commercial
Designer: Sterling Sturtevant
Production cel



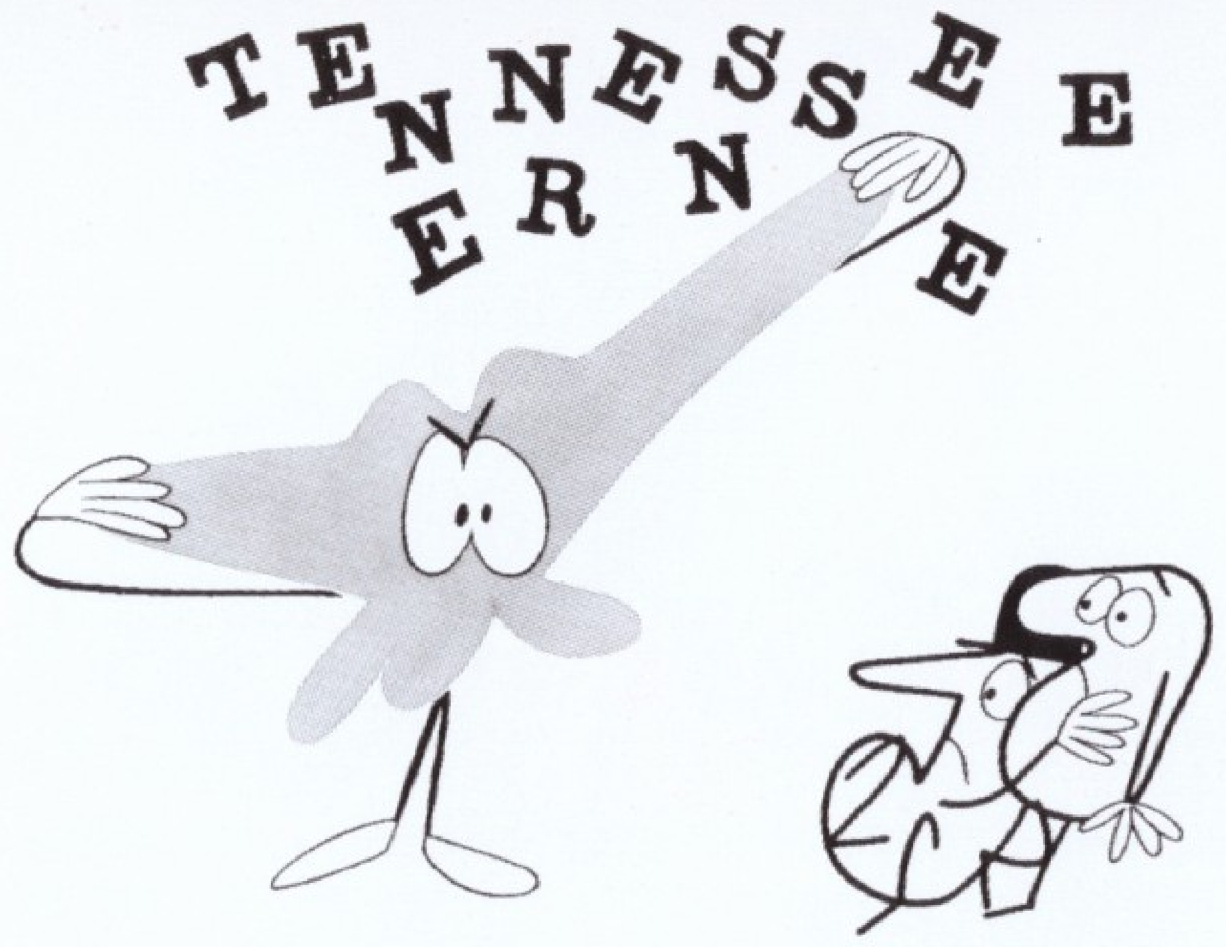
Sterling Sturtevant

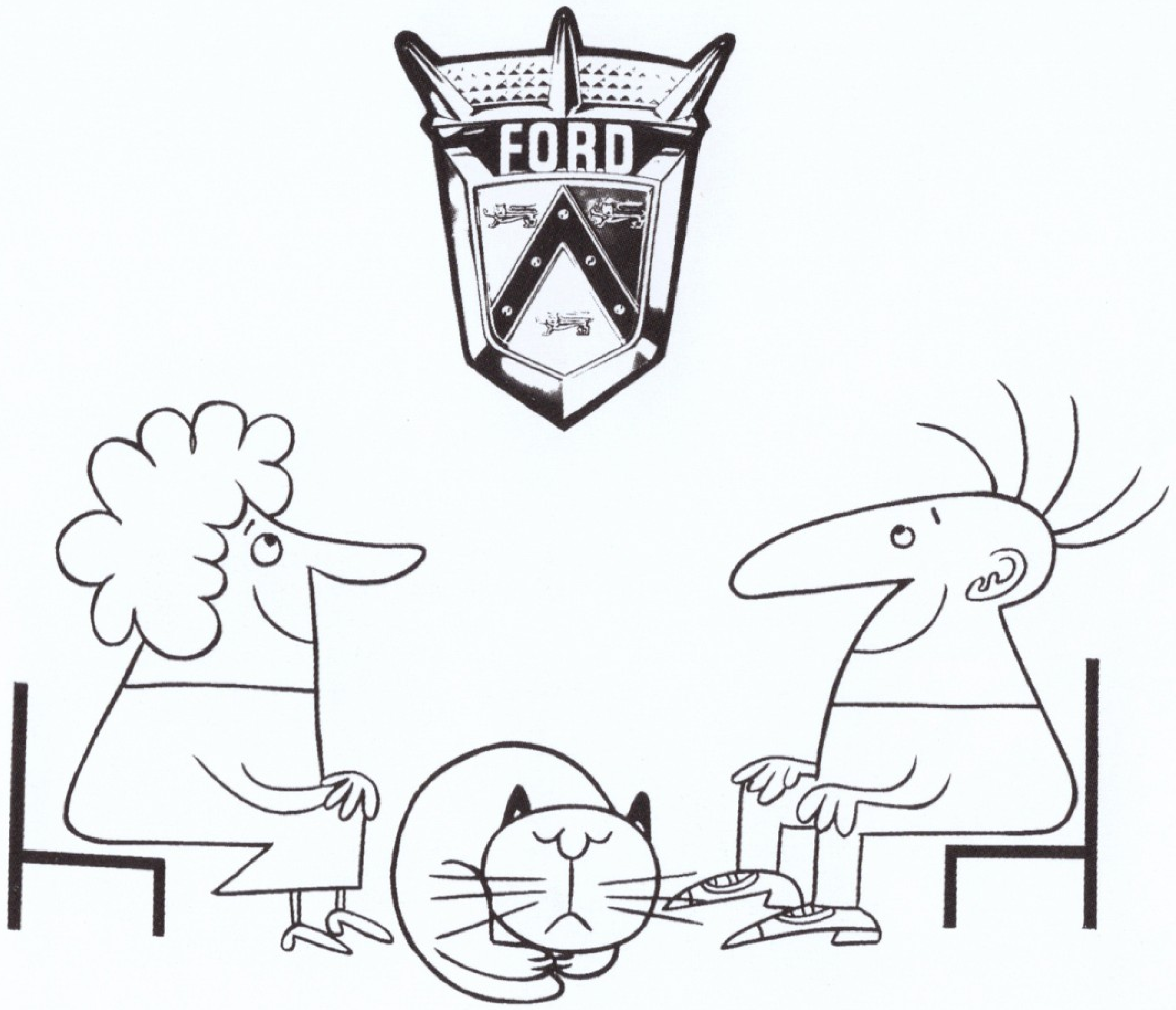
In the late 1950s, when Playhouse Pictures was producing Ford commercials featuring Charlie Brown and Snoopy, *Peanuts* creator Charles Schulz sent a note to Playhouse animation director Bill Melendez commenting that one of the commercials needed "Sterling's touch." He was referring to Sterling Sturtevant (1922–1962), who was the most prolific female character designer of her time and the primary designer of Playhouse's commercials. Talented on any score, let alone her gender, Sturtevant created an impressive body of work that was distinguished by its confident simplicity and directness. Born in Redlands, California, she graduated from the University of Redlands in 1944 and continued further art studies at Chouinard Art Institute. She was hired at Disney in 1947, where she was promoted into the story department and drew story sketches on the Pluto short *Bone Bandit* (1948).

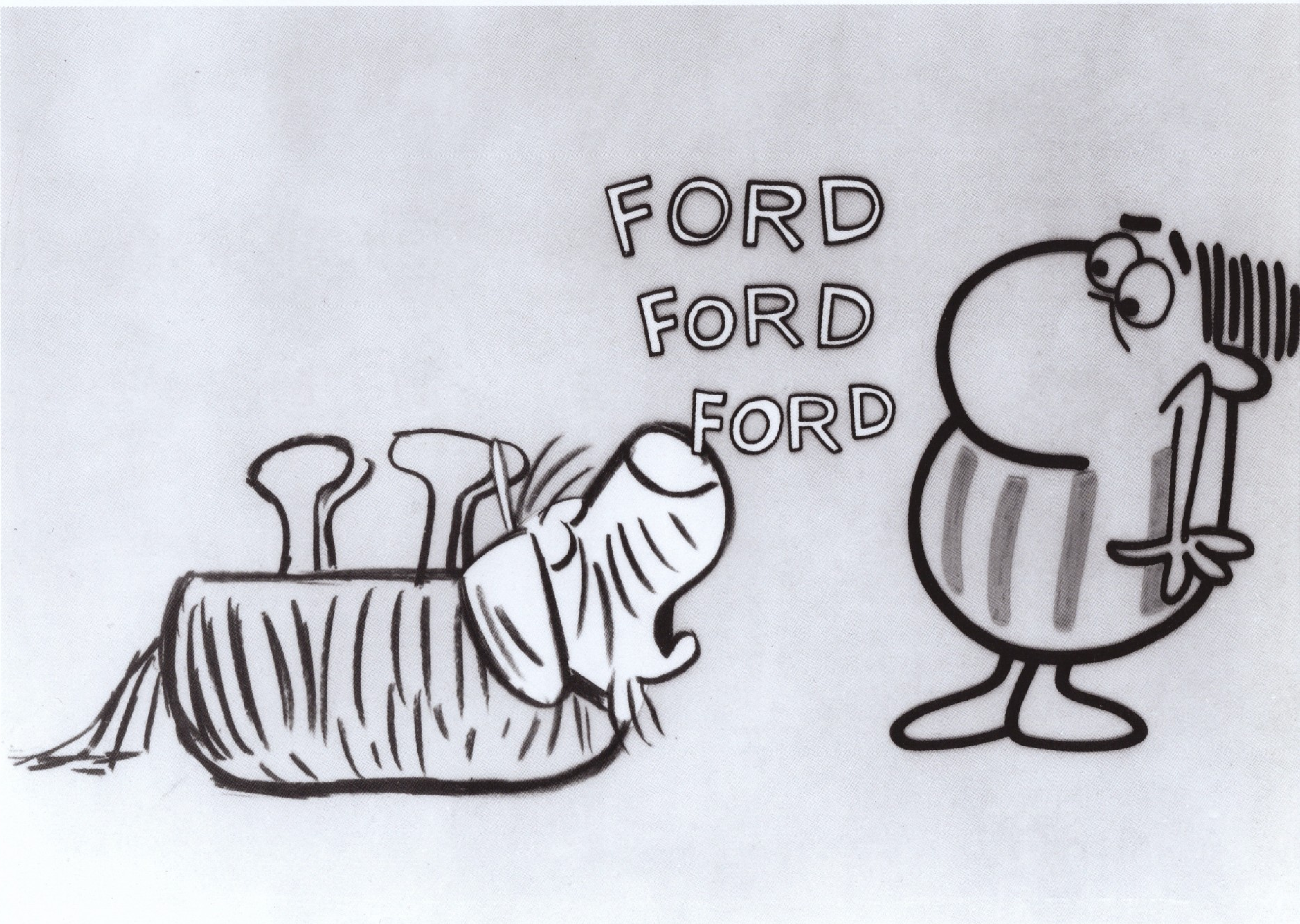
Sturtevant was hired at UPA around 1950 and trained by Bill Hurtz, who recalled that "she was very shy, but she was an incredible draftsman." She contributed designs and storyboards to a variety of UPA films, including the Hurtz-directed industrials *Man on the Land* and *Man Alive;* Bobe Cannon's CBS sales film *It's Time for Everybody;* and Art Heinemann's *The Fifty-first Dragon,* which was an animated short produced for the CBS television program *Omnibus.* In 1953, she became the lead designer and layout artist for the Mister Magoo theatrical series, under the direction of Pete Burness. Sturtevant left UPA in 1954 and soon thereafter joined Playhouse Pictures. Her character designs had become looser and more fluid since her days at UPA. The malleable quality of her designs presented an opportunity for the Playhouse animators to stretch out and play with the characters' shapes in a manner that was rare for other designed animation of the period. Sturtevant worked at Playhouse until her death from pancreatic cancer in 1962.



Various Ford commercials from the 1950s
Designer: Sterling Sturtevant


TENNESSEE ERNIE


FORD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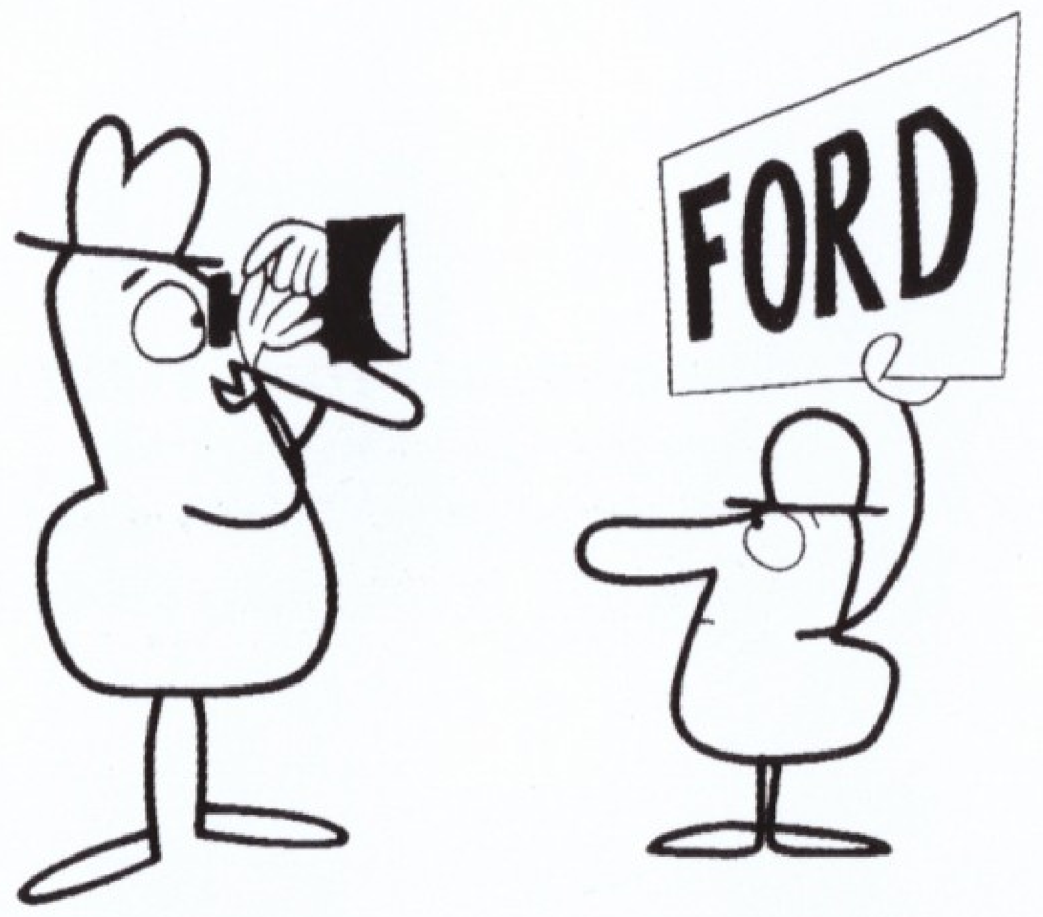
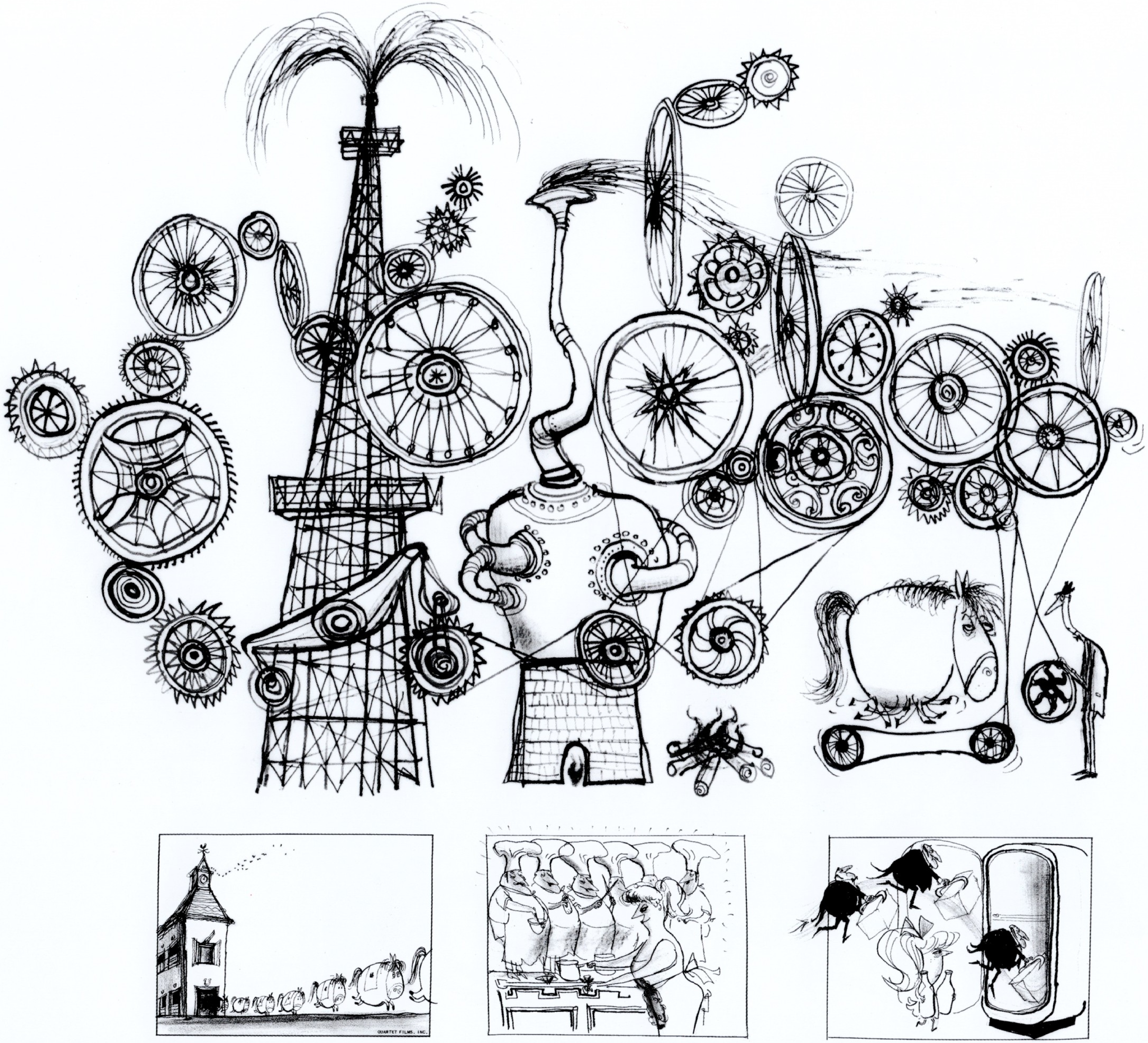

FORD

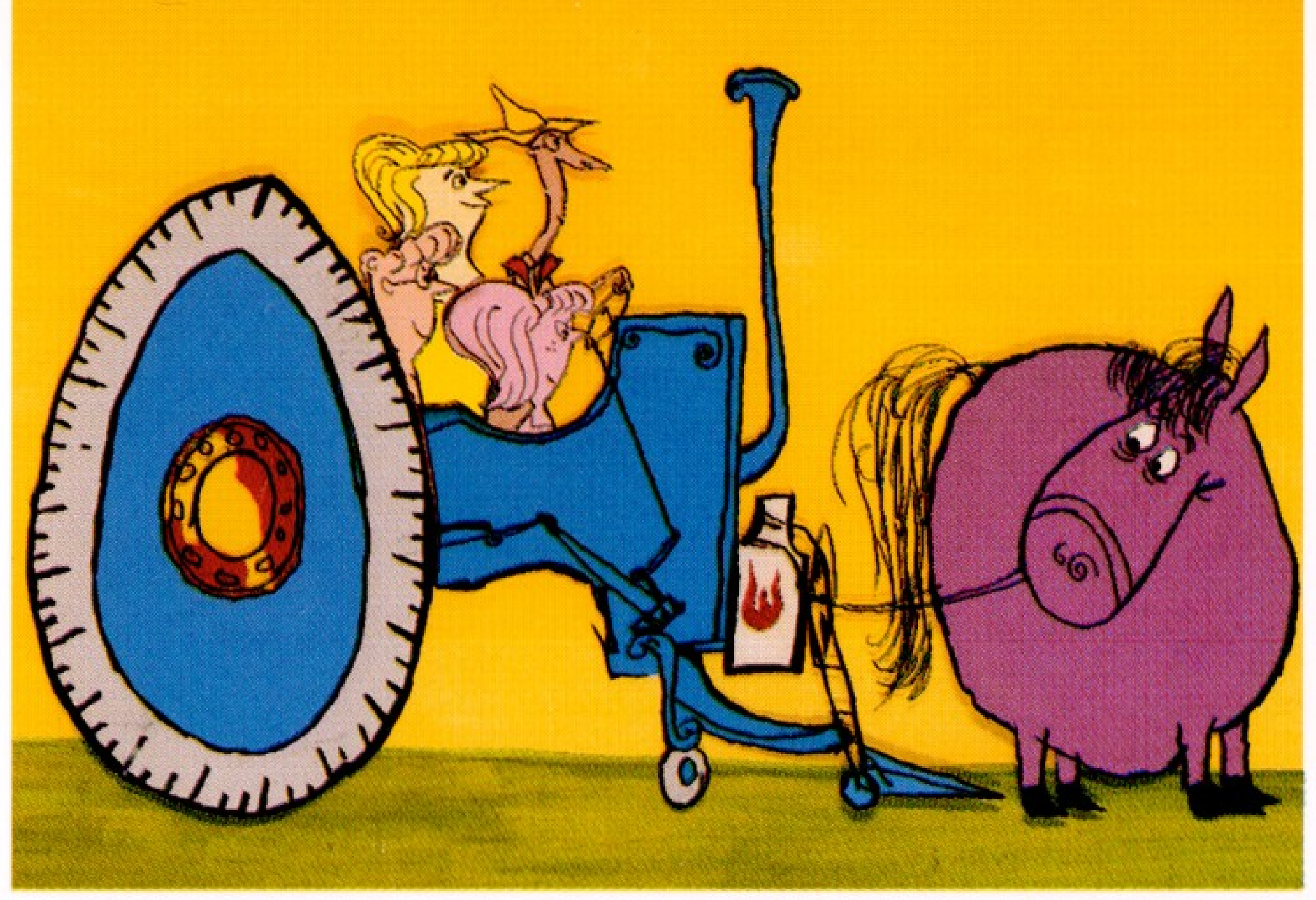
ENERGETICALLY YOURS

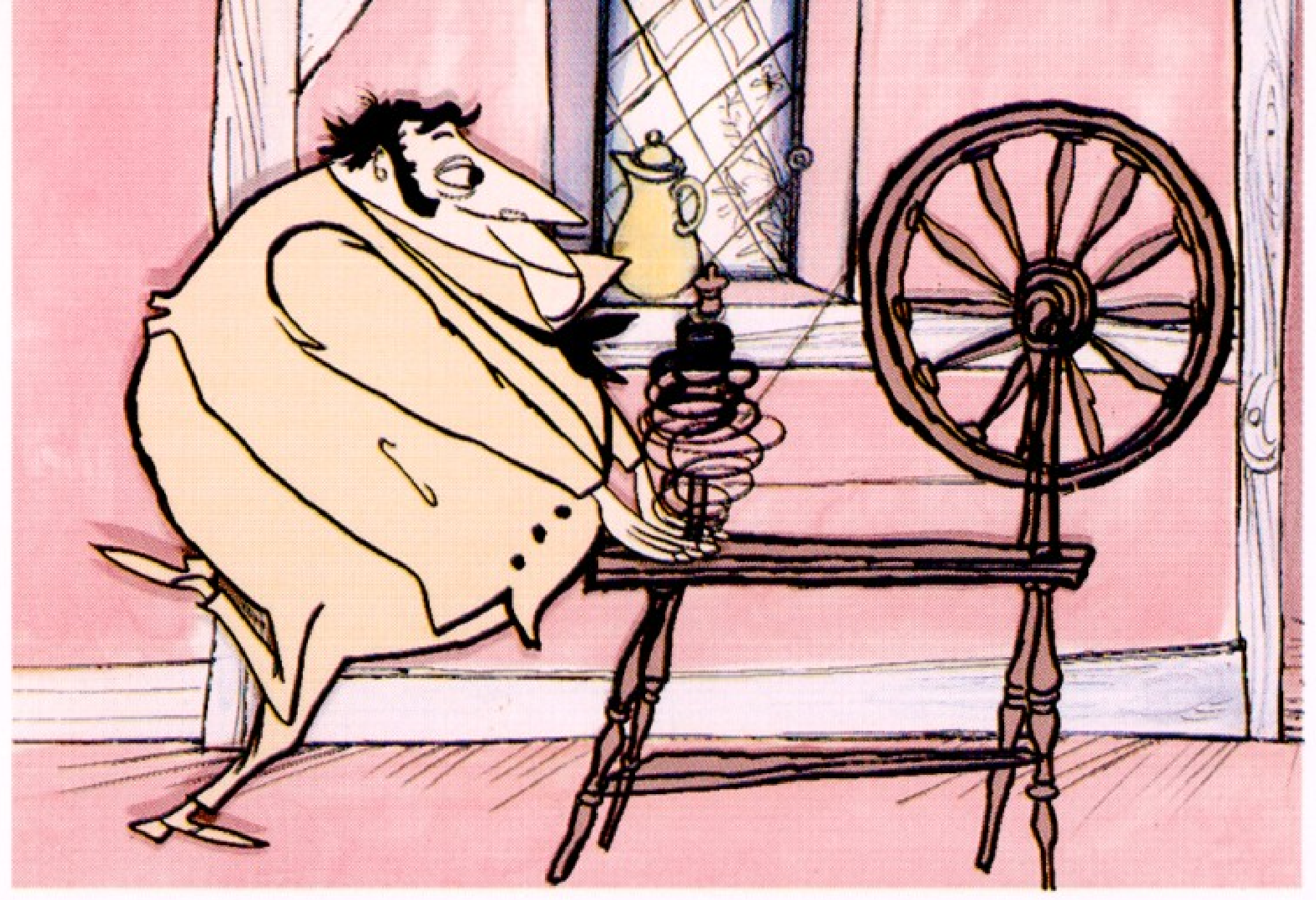
The studio's most ambitious project during the decade was *Energetically Yours,* a film produced for Standard Oil Company. It premiered as part of an NBC television special in October 1957 and later was released as a stand-alone industrial film. The project was designed and storyboarded by British illustrator Ronald Searle, and the finished film impressively captures the flavor of Searle's knotty line quality, due largely to the excellent work of ink-and-paint supervisor Mary Cain and her crew of inkers.

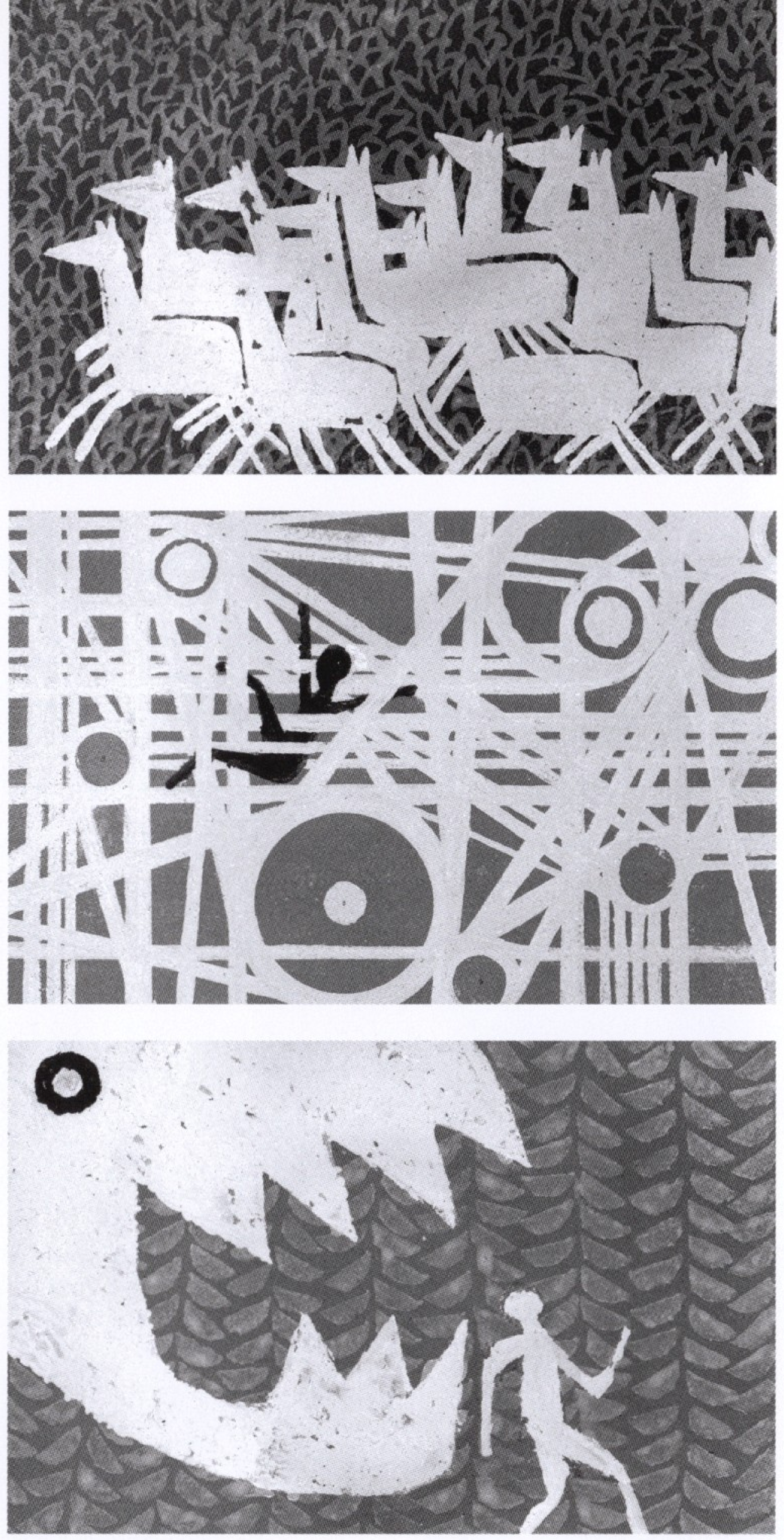
The director of the film was UPA cofounder David Hilberman, who had recently returned to the United States from a "self-imposed exile in England" following the blacklist and closure of his New York commercial studio, Tempo Productions, in 1953. The animation work was divided between Playhouse Pictures and another Los Angeles commercial studio, Quartet Films, with Playhouse's Bill Melendez and Quartet's Art Babbitt sharing animation supervision duties.


QUARTET FILMS, INC.

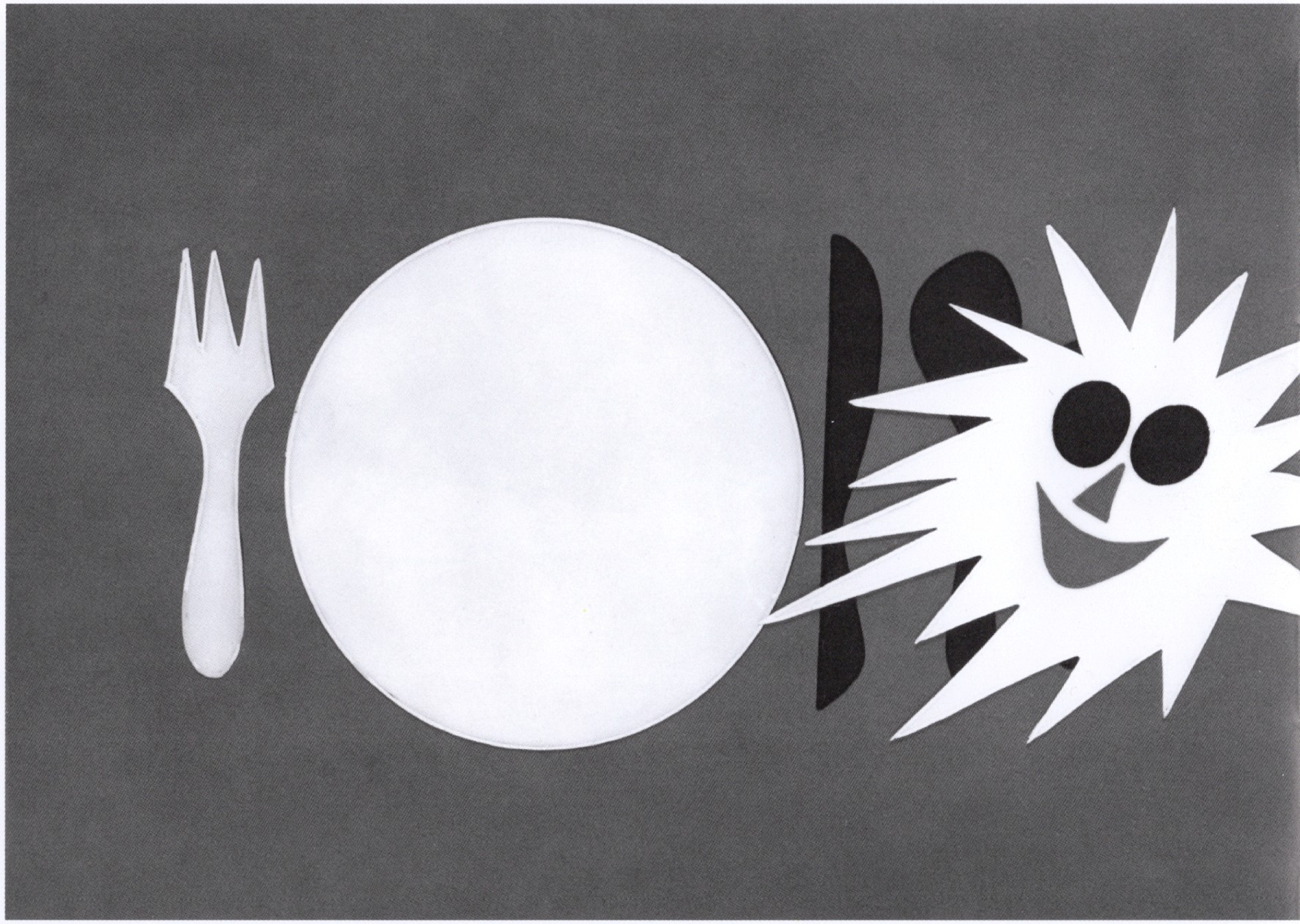
***ENERGETICALLY YOURS* (1957)**
Director: David Hilberman
This page: Storyboard panels
Opposite: Production cels and backgrounds





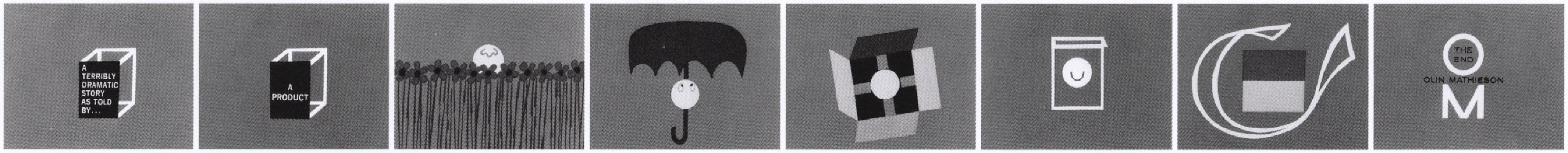


IBM promotional film
Designers: Saul Bass
and Art Goodman
Storyboard concept drawings by Art Goodman



Sun detergent commercial
Designers: Saul Bass
and Art Goodman

Olin Mathieson packaging materials commercial
Designers: Saul Bass
and Art Goodman
Film stills


A TERRIBLY DRAMATIC STORY AS TOLD BY...
A PRODUCT
THE END
OLIN MATHIESON
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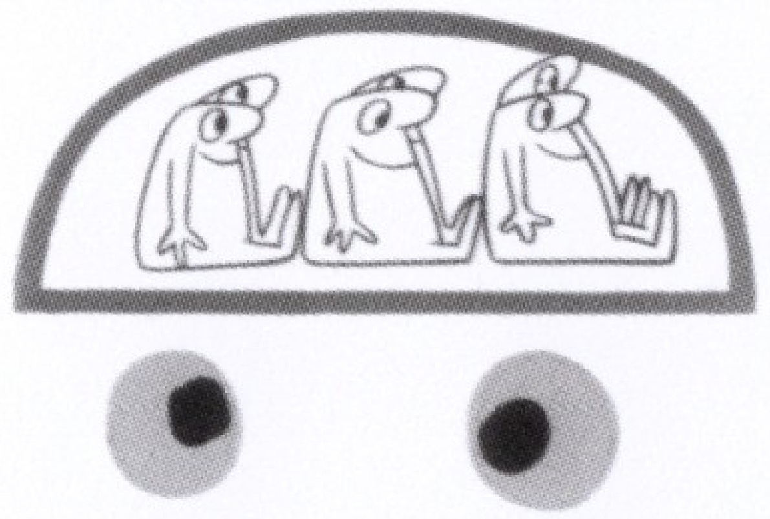
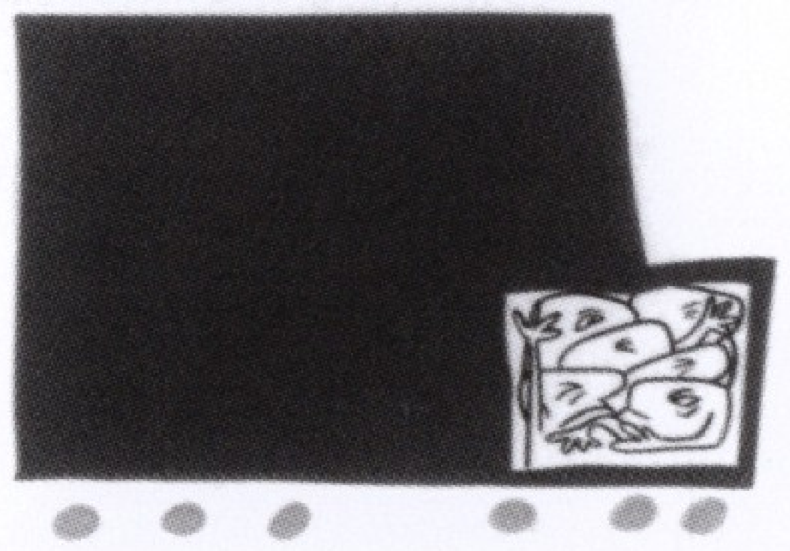
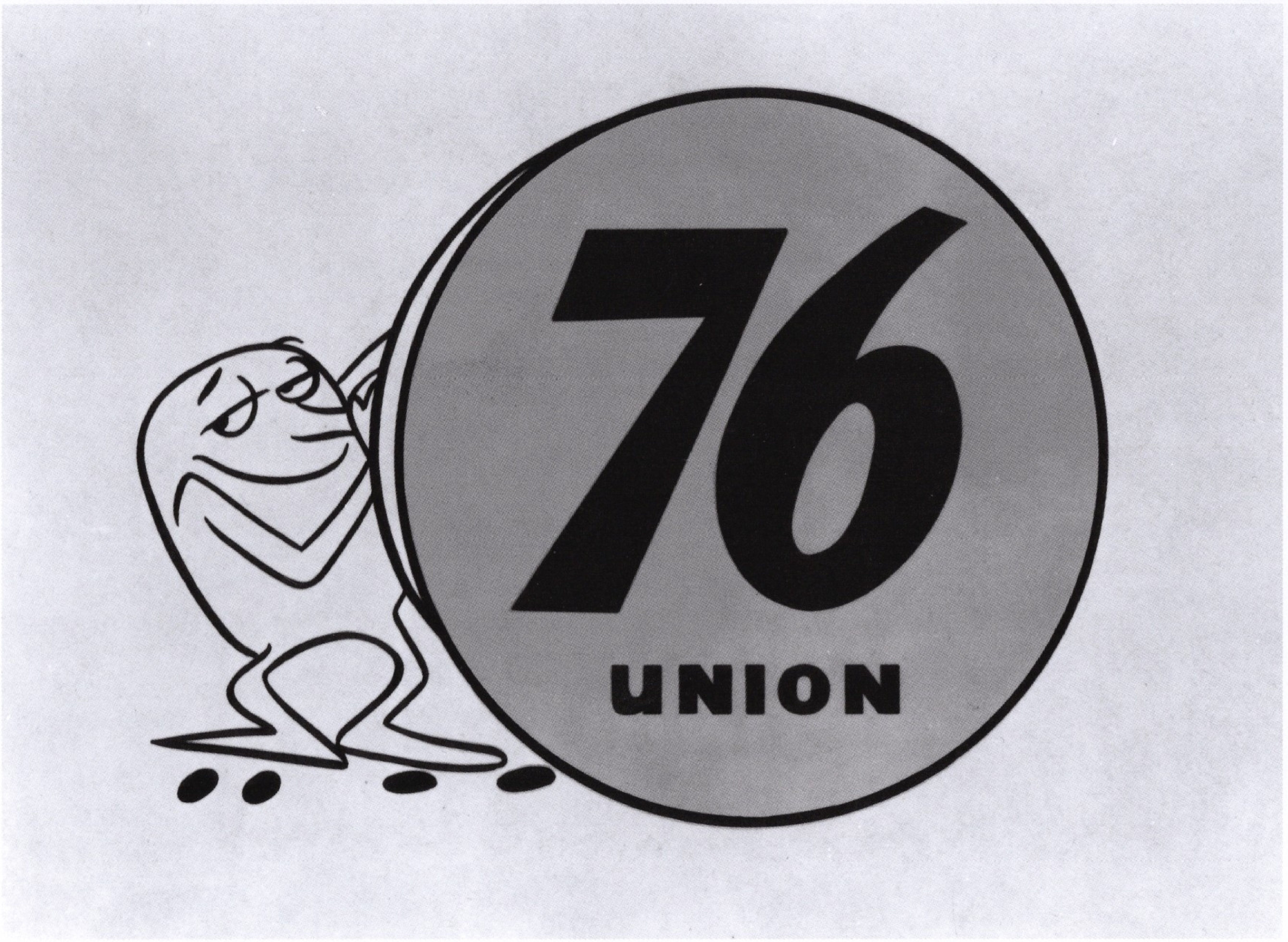




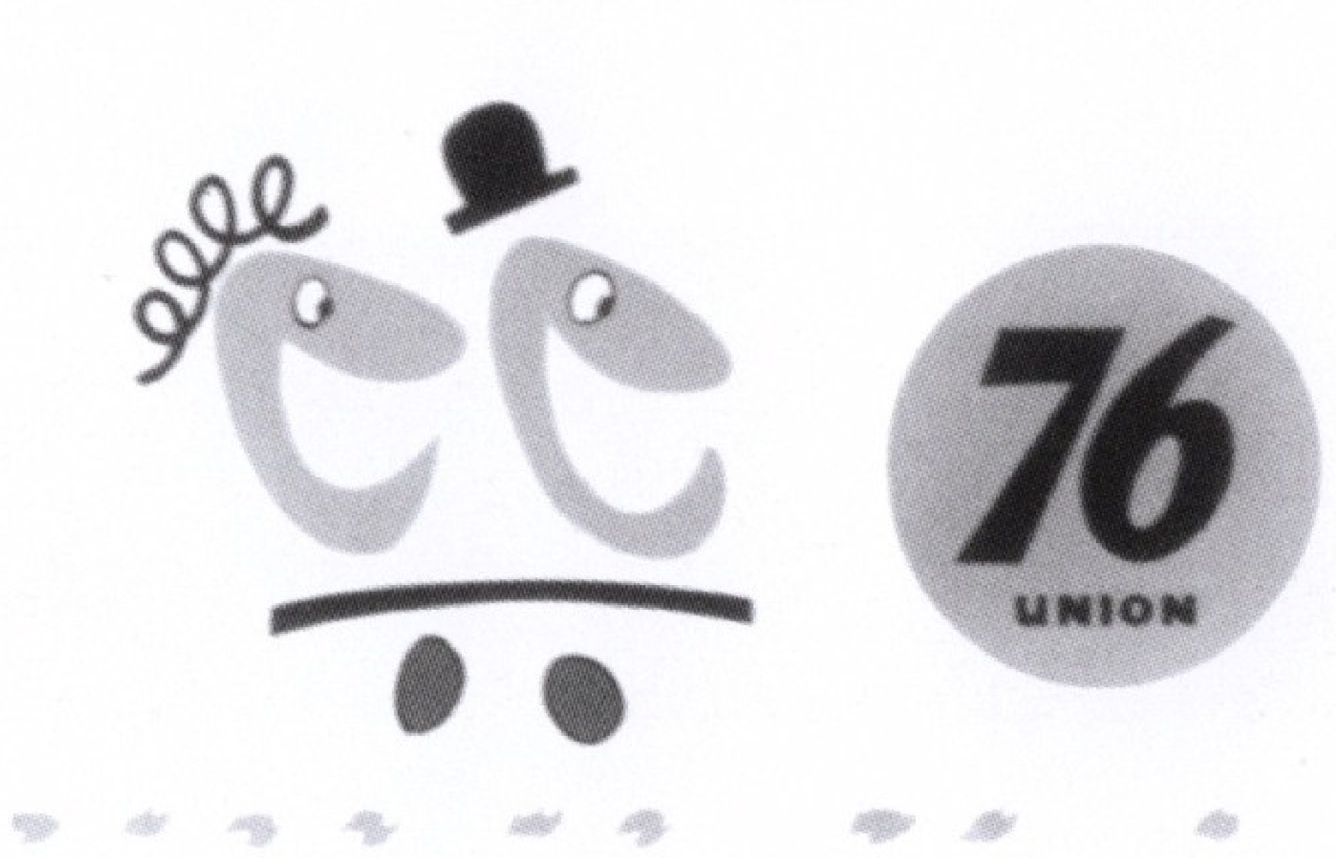


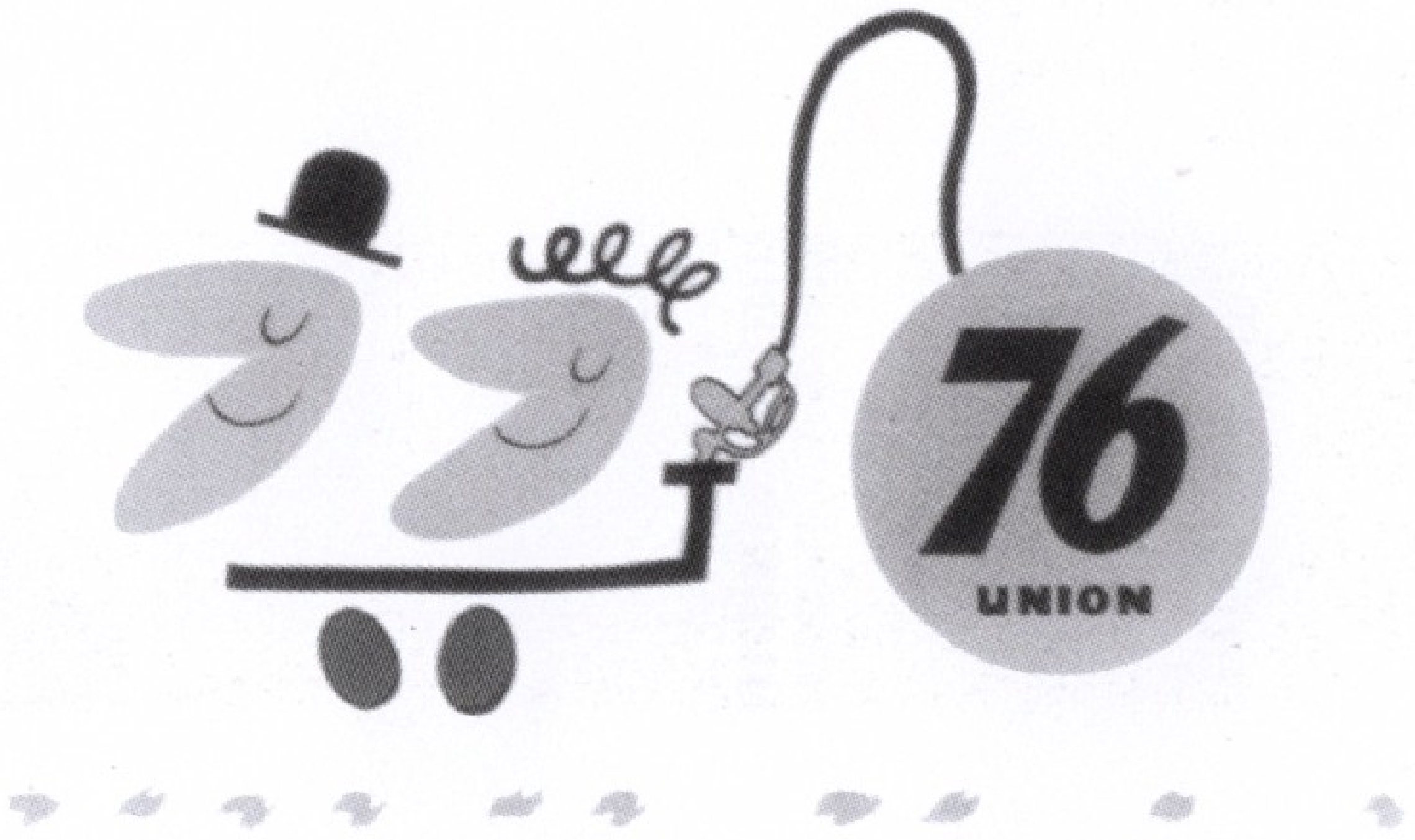
Union 76 gasoline commercial
Designer: Sterling Sturtevant

"Stop at the Sign of 76"

An impressive example of the Playhouse commercial style can be found in the "Stop at the Sign of 76" commercial produced for the Union Oil Company of California. Contemporary animation artist Mike Kazaleh credits the spot's two animators for its success: "Herman Cohen and Emery Hawkins were both in genius mode. The movement in the commercial is nearly abstract." Kazaleh notes that for some animators, like Cohen (and similarly, Hawkins), who had been working on standard "Disney-style" characters in the 1940s, the transition to animating stylized characters in the 1950s was a very natural artistic progression:

> *Herman Cohen was a top flight animator and always drew his characters with clearly delineated shapes, even when working with conventional characters like Bugs Bunny, Droopy or Woody Woodpecker. When he moved to the studios that did more stylized work, like Playhouse, it turned out that he had an amazing hidden talent for stylized animation. His animation had even stronger graphic shapes, and the way he played the shapes off of each other from pose to pose was sensational.*

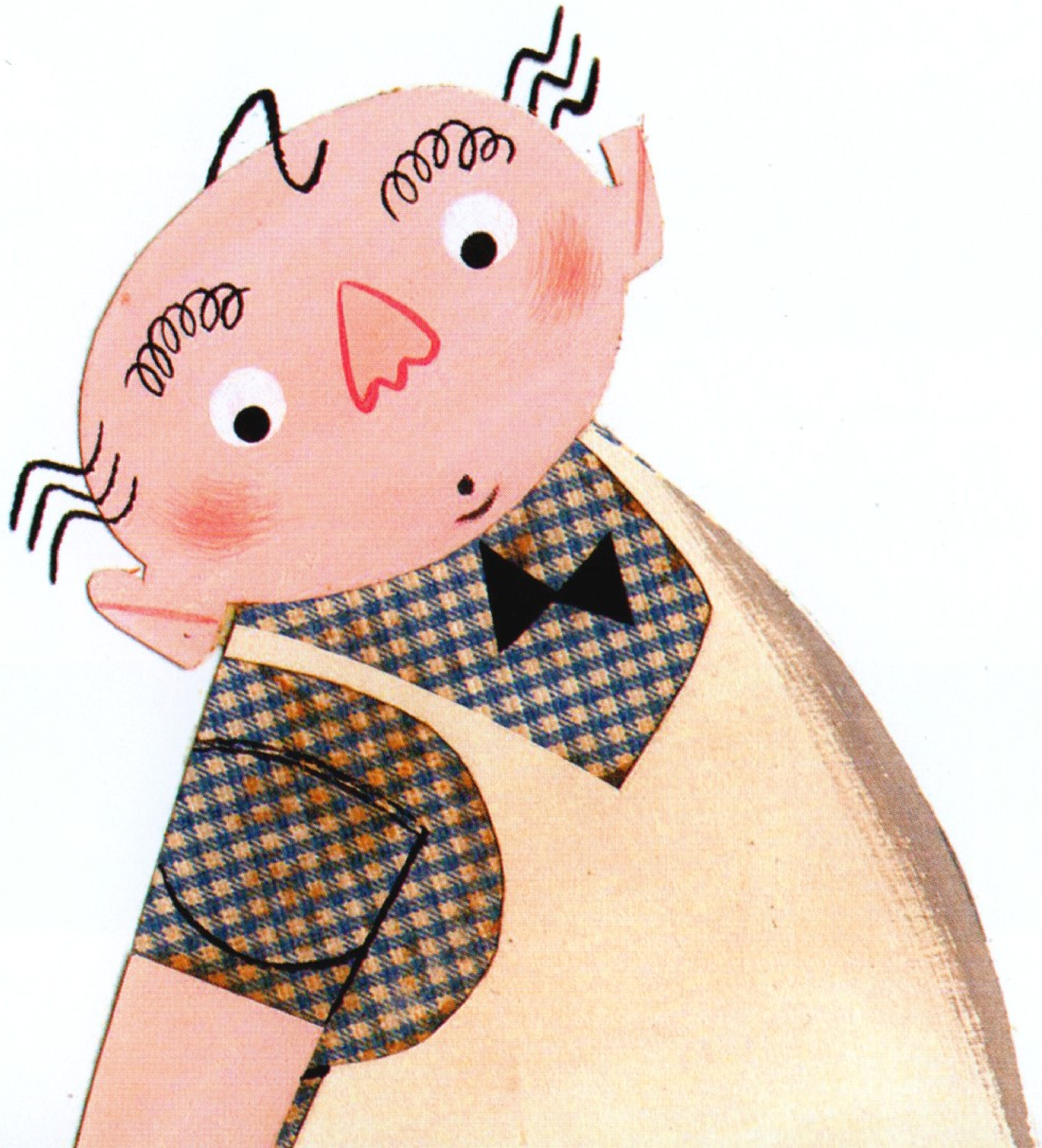




R

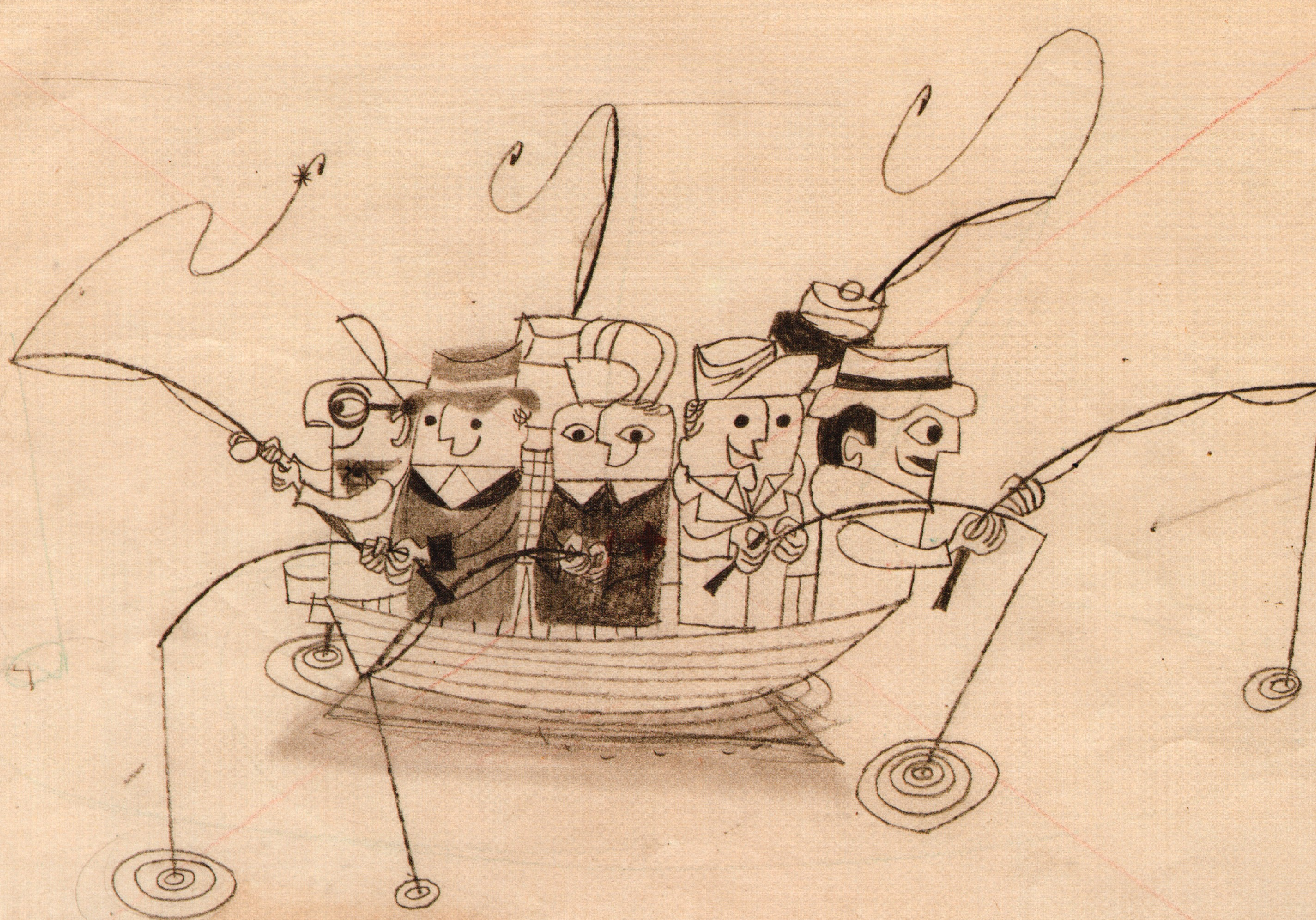
RAY PATIN PRODUCTIONS

Ray Patin (1906–1976) would appear to be an unlikely candidate to head one of Hollywood's first modern TV commercial studios. A former animator and storyman at studios like Disney, Charles Mintz, and Leon Schlesinger Productions, Patin started his own studio in the mid-1940s. It had become one of the busiest commercial animation studios in Los Angeles by the early 1950s. Patin's personal drawing style was heavily steeped in classical cartooning. His funny animal comics from the 1940s show little appreciation for contemporary graphics, and his advertising work is similarly bland and traditional, as evidenced in the mascot he designed for Rainier Beer. Patin, however, was an astute businessman, who grudgingly accepted the reality that if he were to succeed, he would need to produce television commercials at odds with his own aesthetic preferences. Norm Gottfredson, a background stylist and designer at Patin's, credits Patin art director Gus Jekel as an instrumental force in luring many top designers to the studio during the 1950s. The roster of artists who passed through the studio is indeed a who's who of animation design talent: Lew Keller, Ed Levitt, Tom Oreb, John Hubley, Bobe Cannon, Ted Parmelee, Norm Gottfredson, and Bernard Gruver.



Left: Production cel from an unidentified commercial

Right: JAX Beer Commercial
Designer: Lew Keller
layout drawing

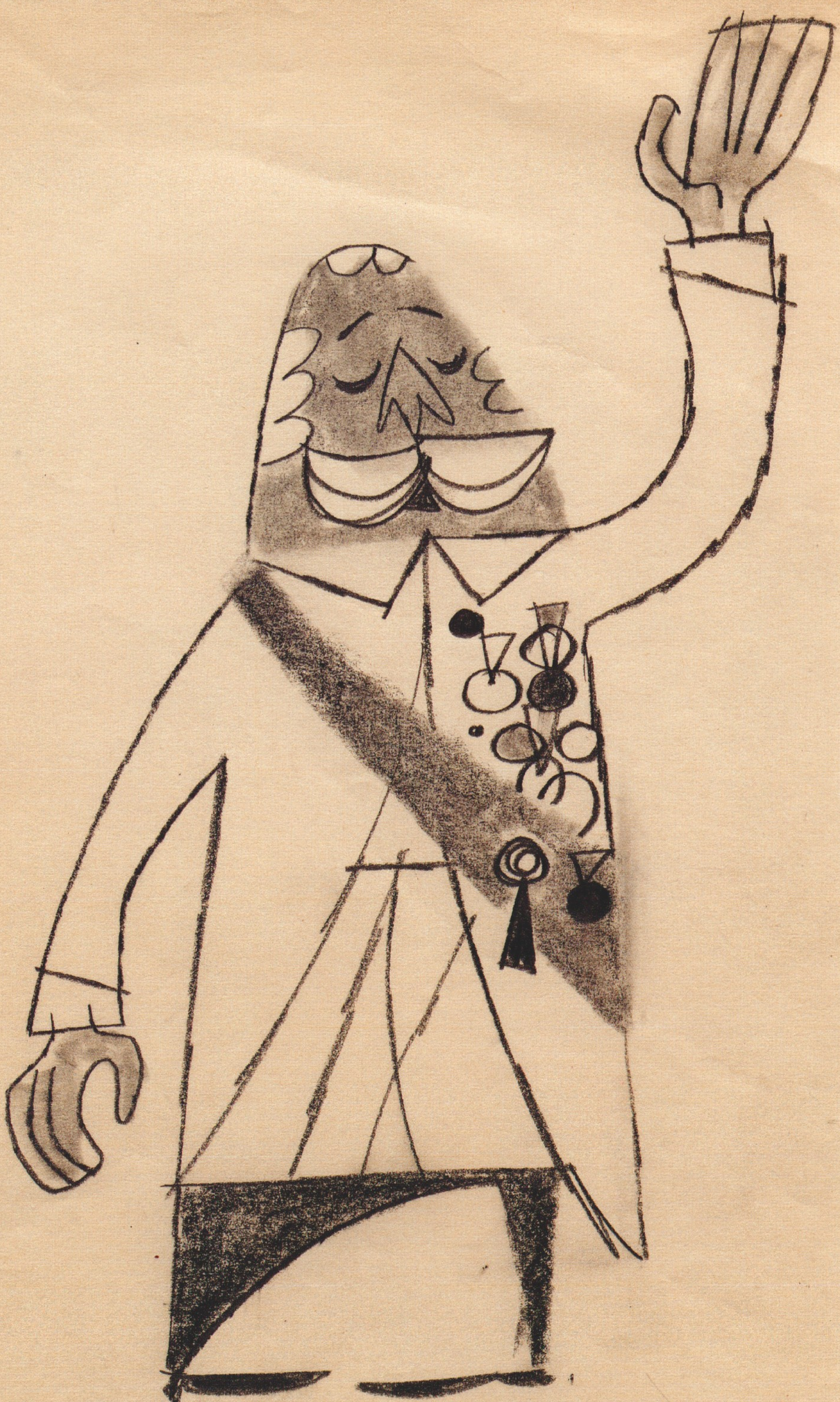


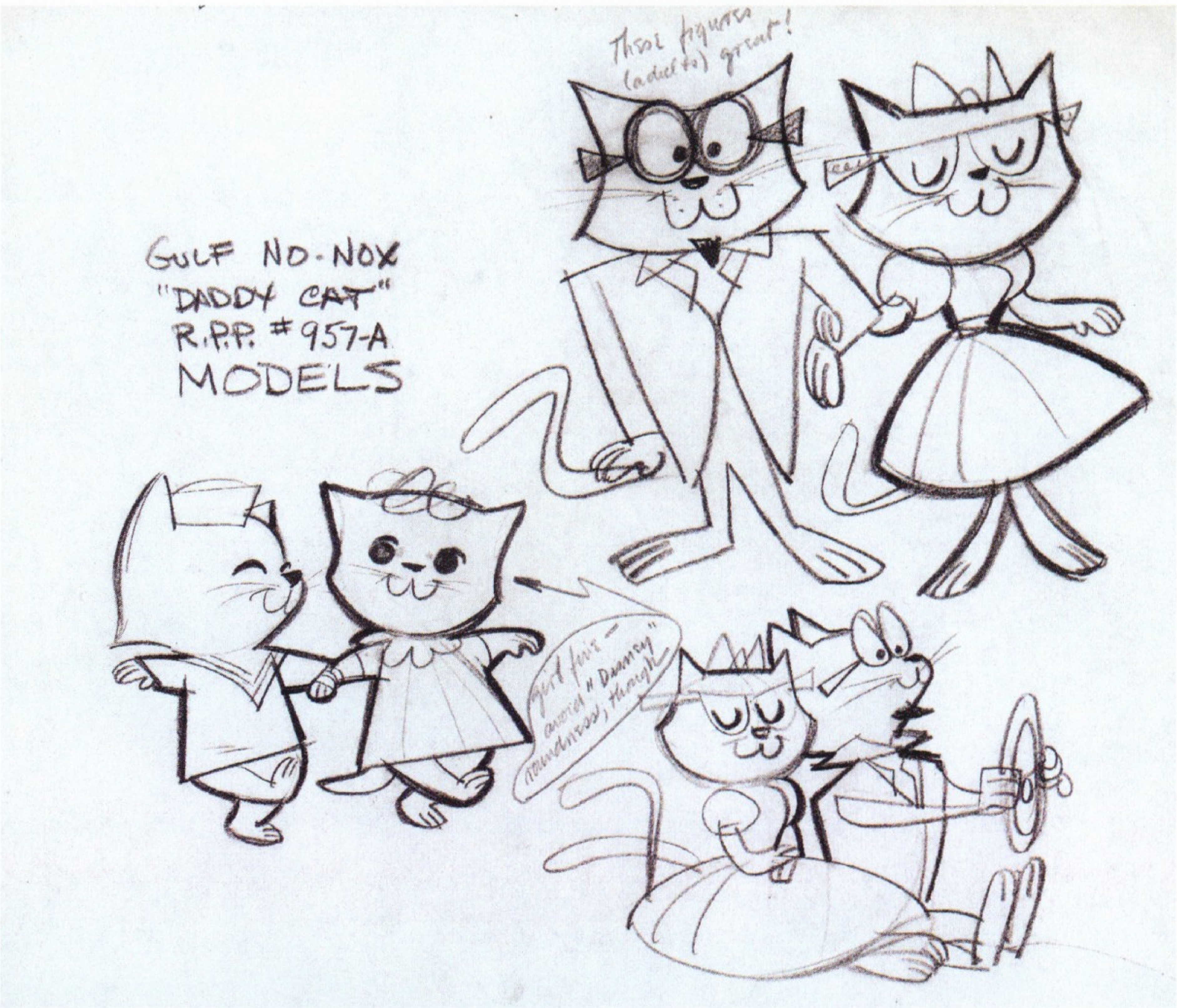
BE
11

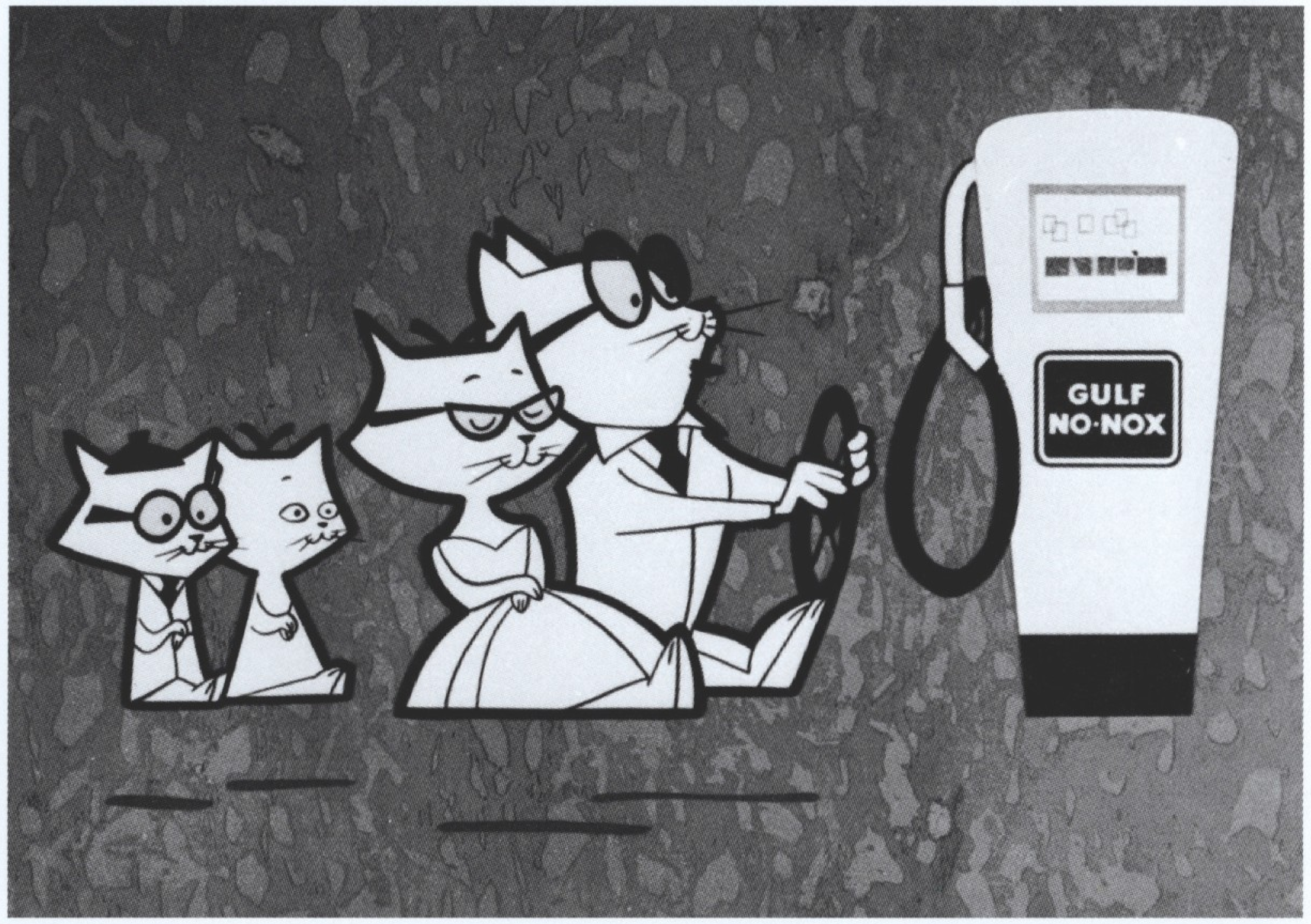
MEN

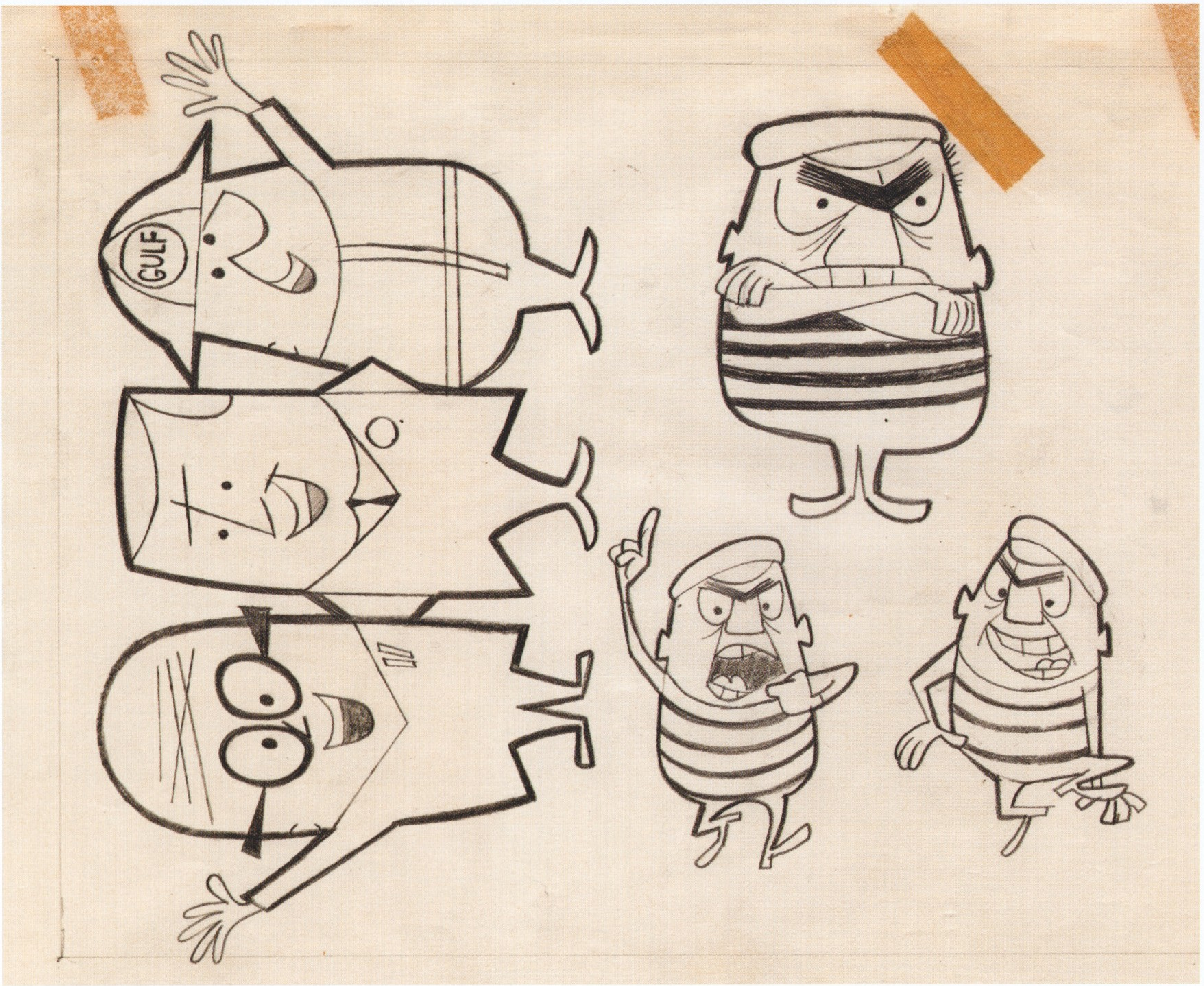
BOF

+ RE



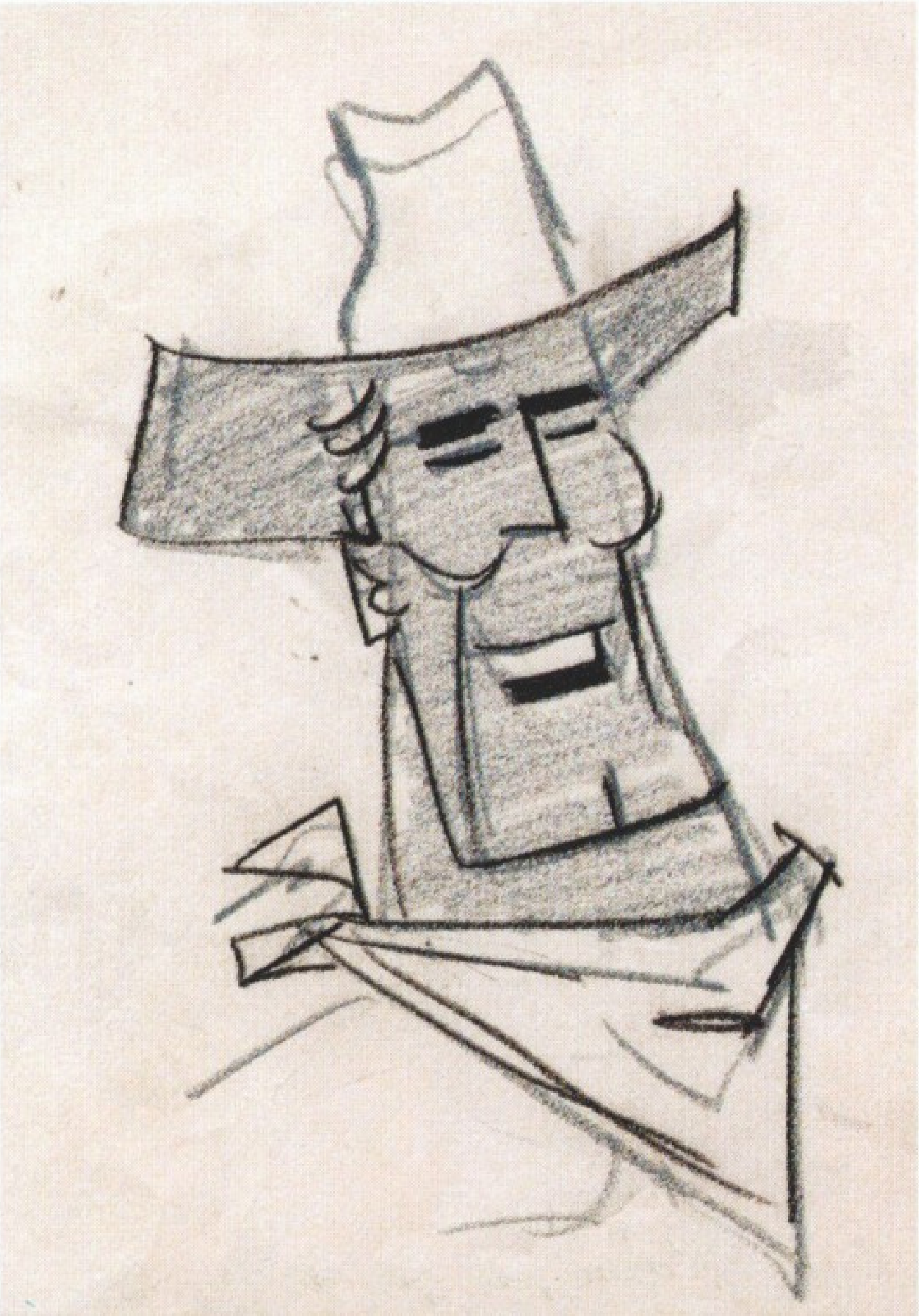

GULF NO-NOX
"DADDY CAT"
R.P.P. #957-A
MODELS
These figures (adults) great!
girl fine — avoid "Disney" roundness, though

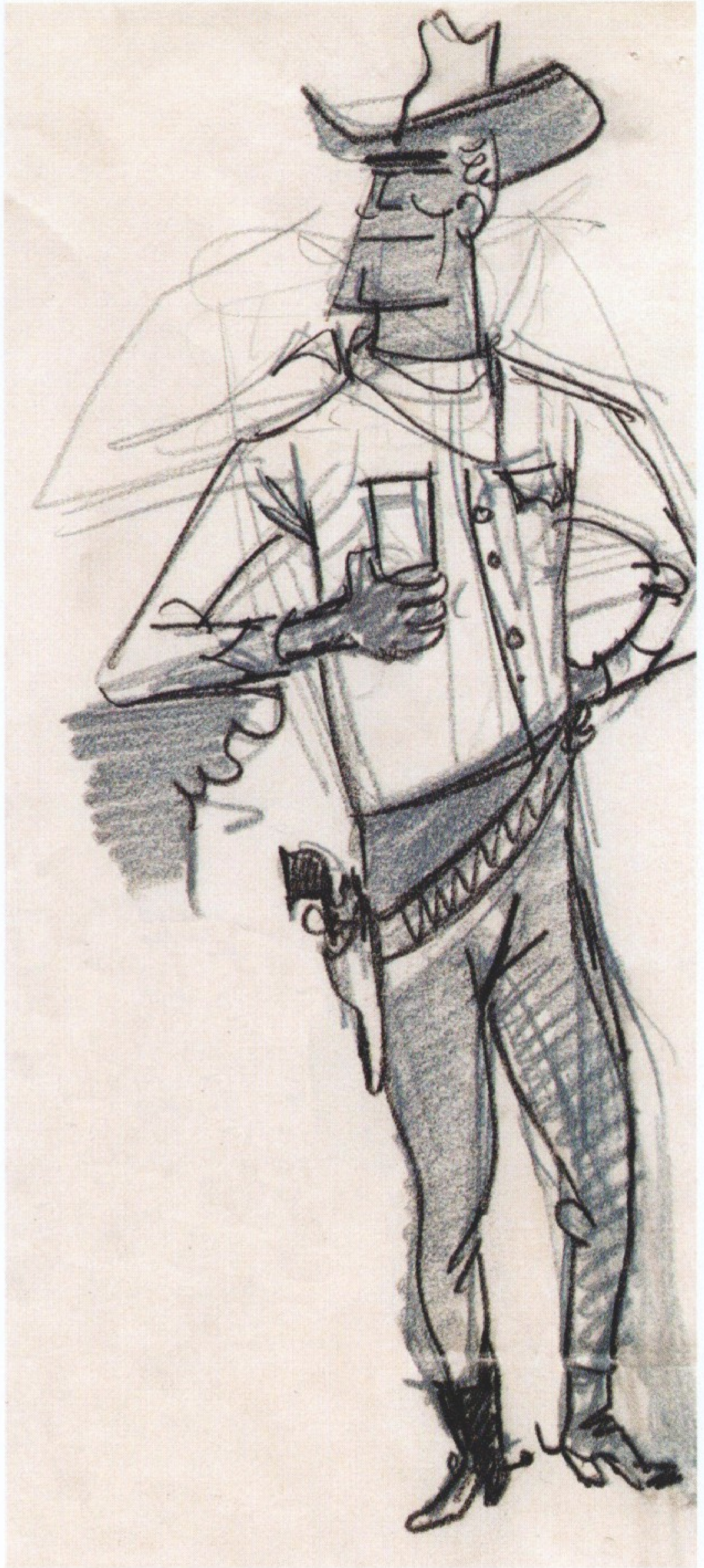

GULF
NO-NOX



Above: **Gulf Oil commercial**
Designer unknown
Model sheet

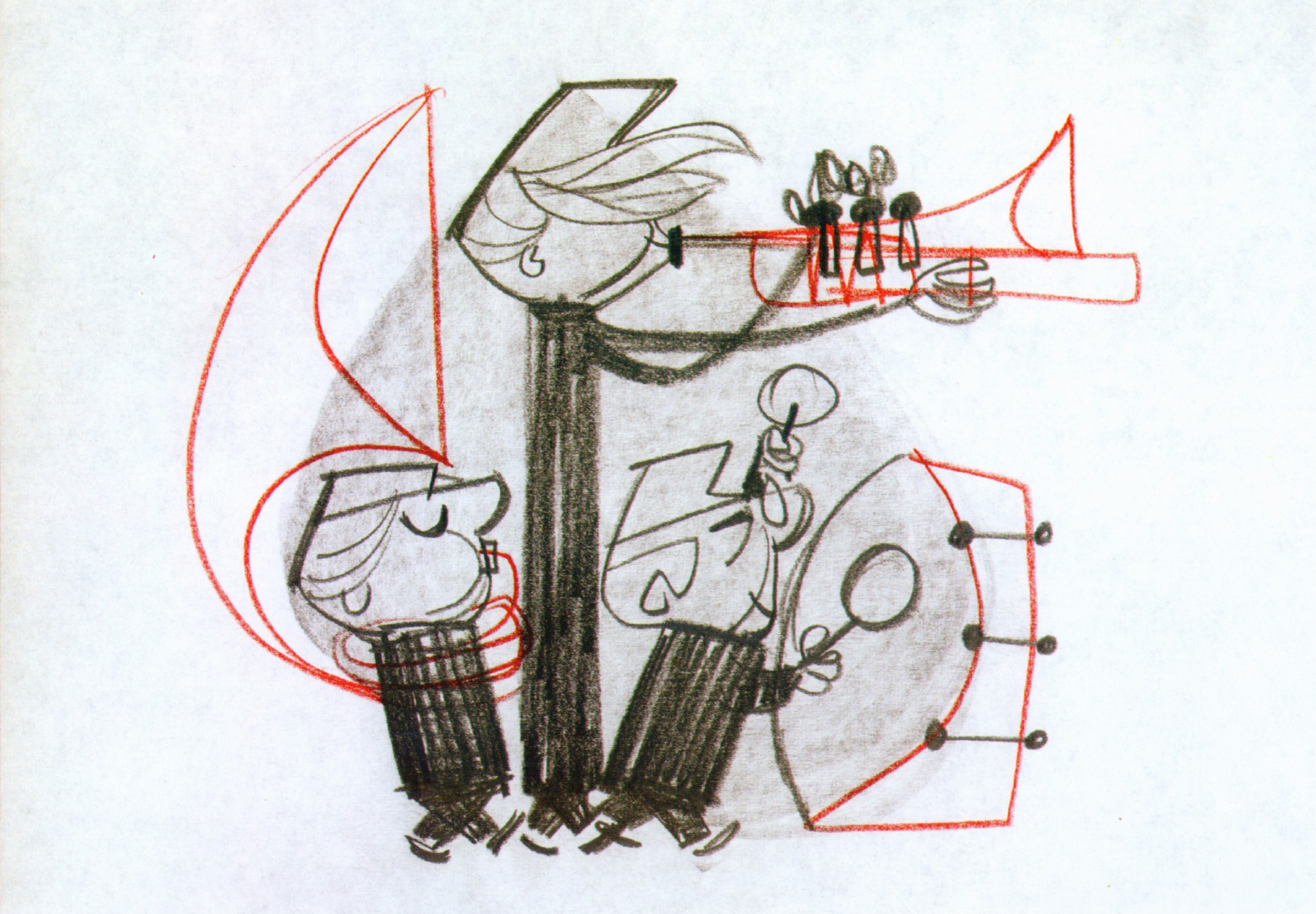
Right, and far right: **Bar-S Meats commercial**
Designer: Ted Parmelee
Model sheet drawings



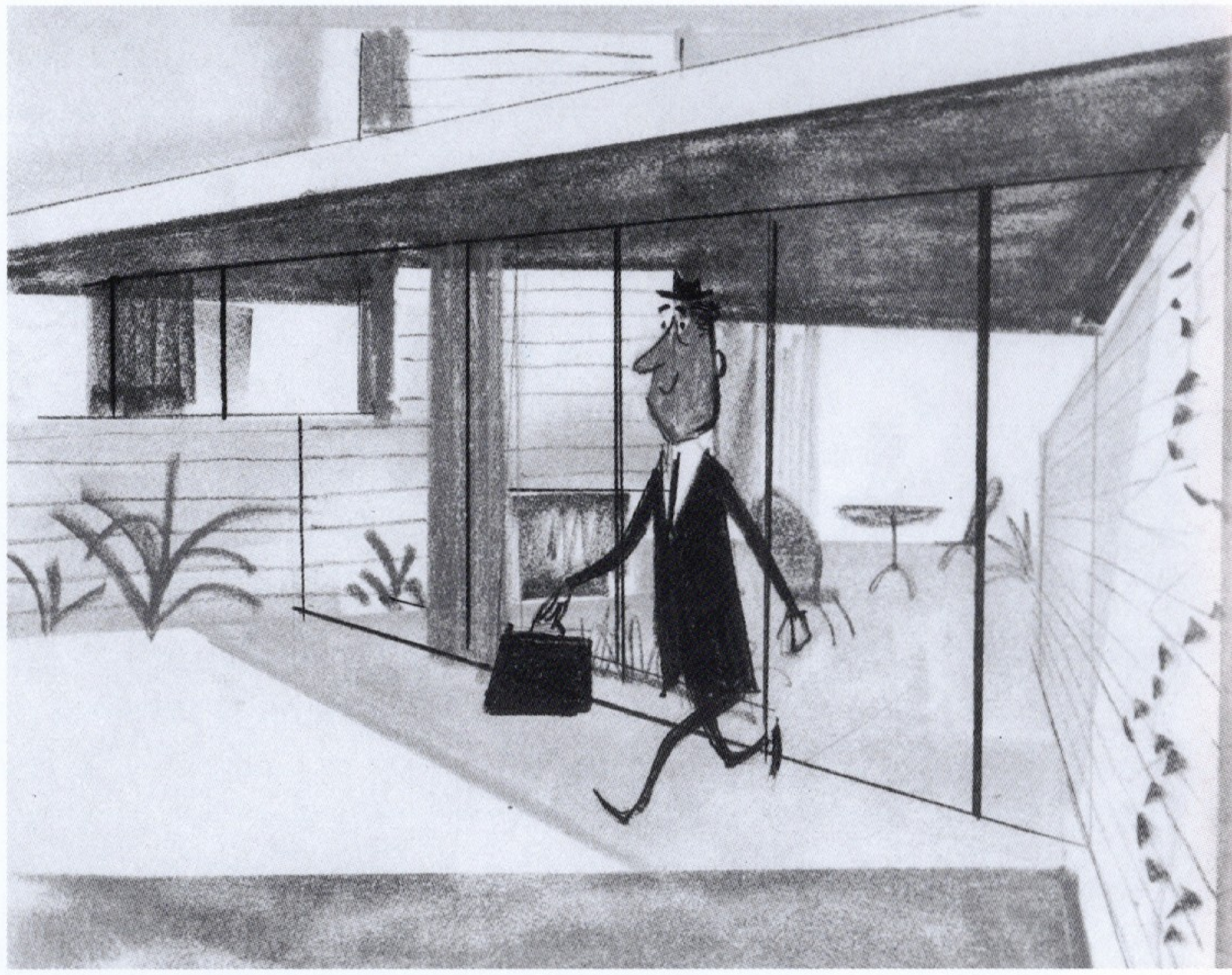


Opposite, left: **Rainier Beer commercial**
Designer: Lew Keller
Model sheet drawing

Opposite, right: **Gulf Oil commercial**
Designer unknown
Model sheet and film still

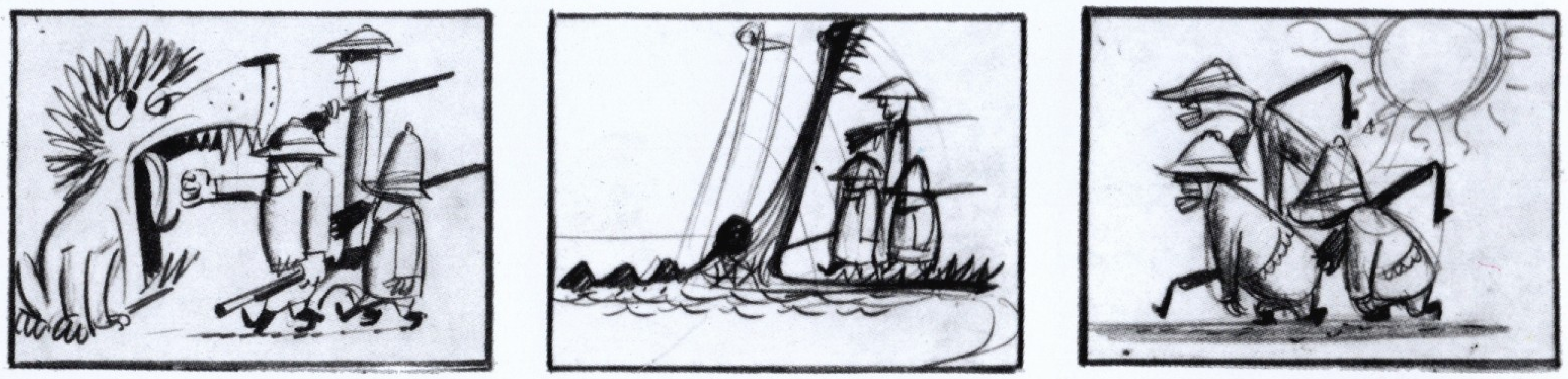


Layout drawing from an unidentified commercial.

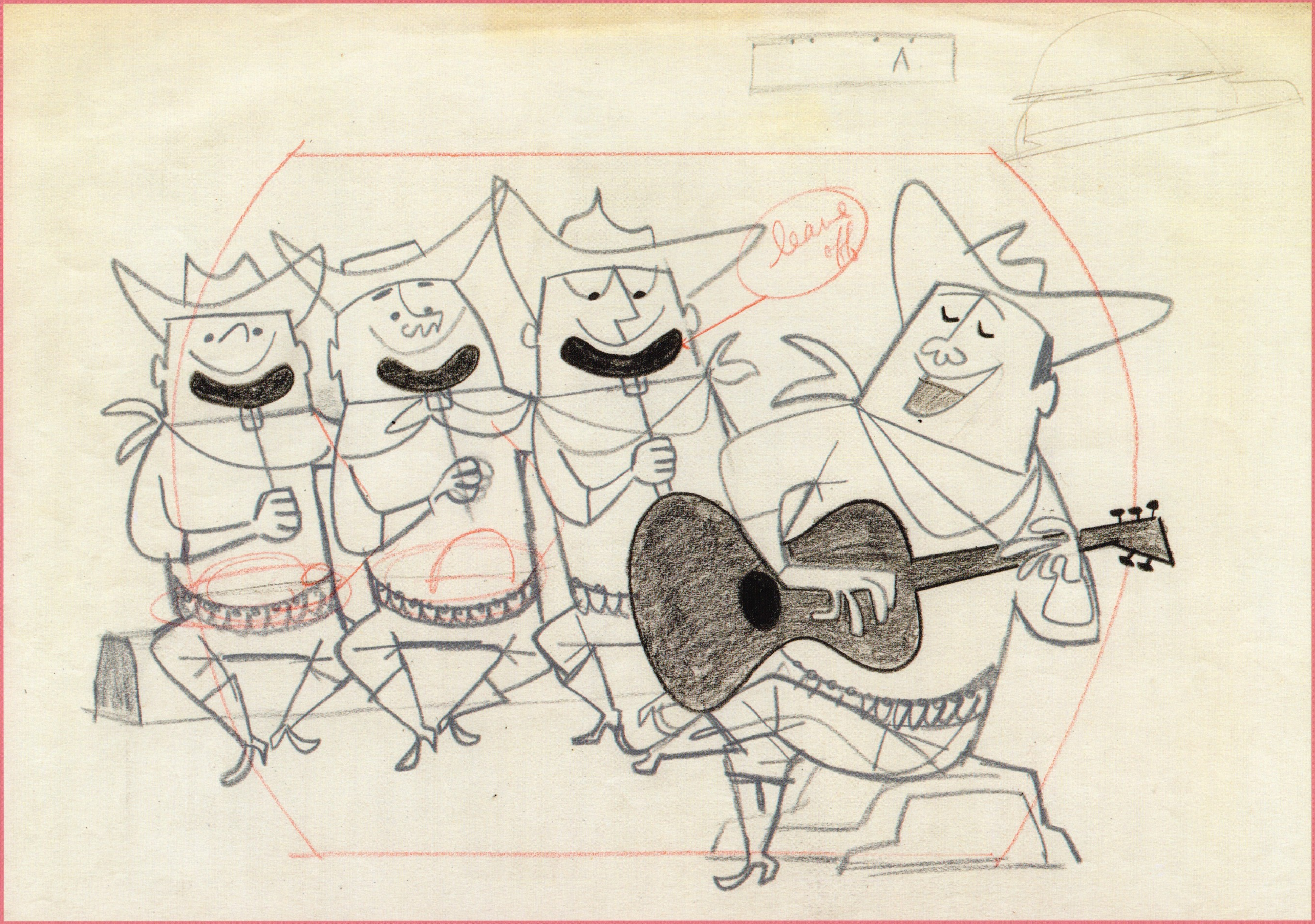


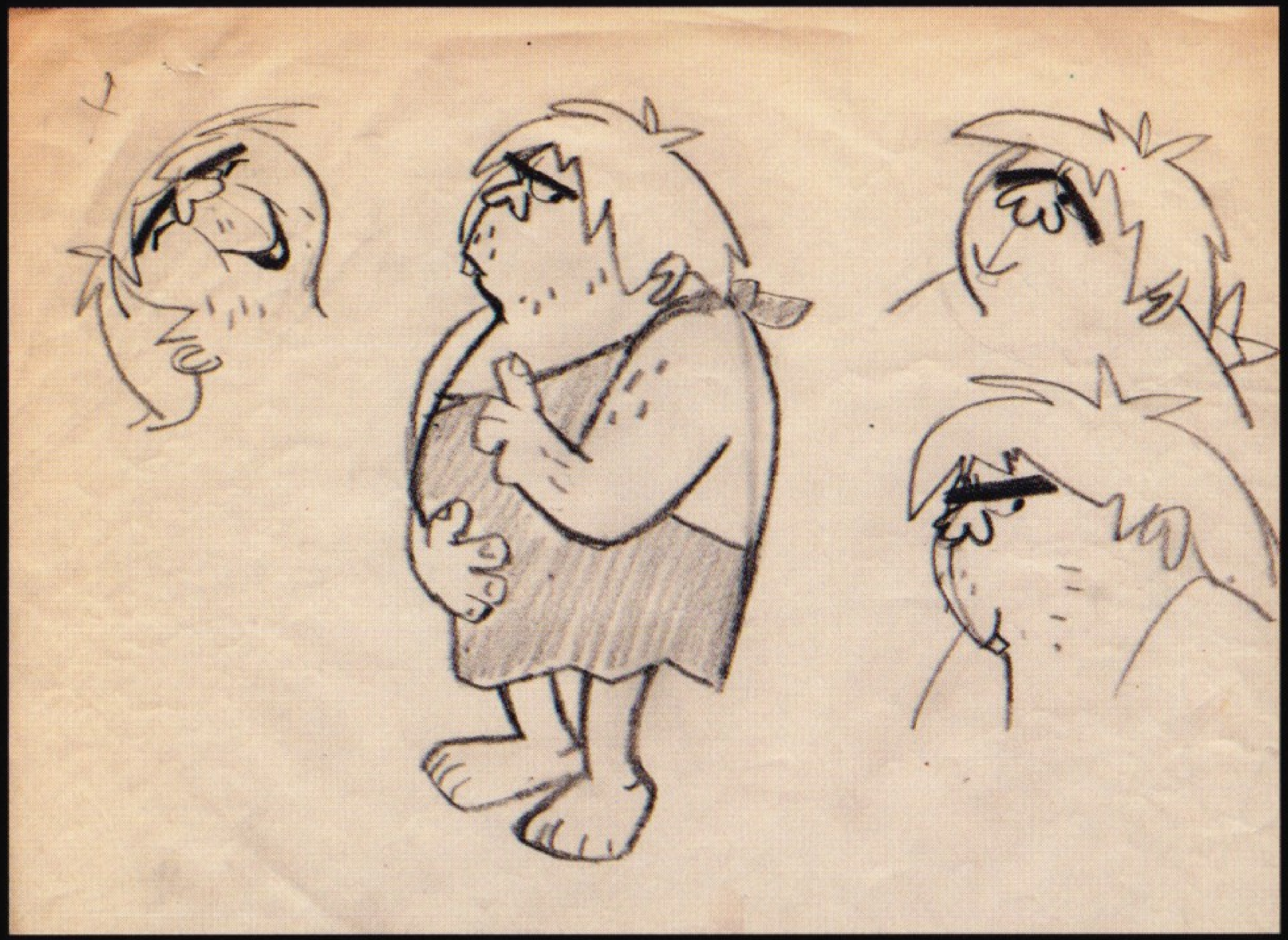
Bardahl Motor Oil commercial
Designer: Lew Keller
Storyboard drawing

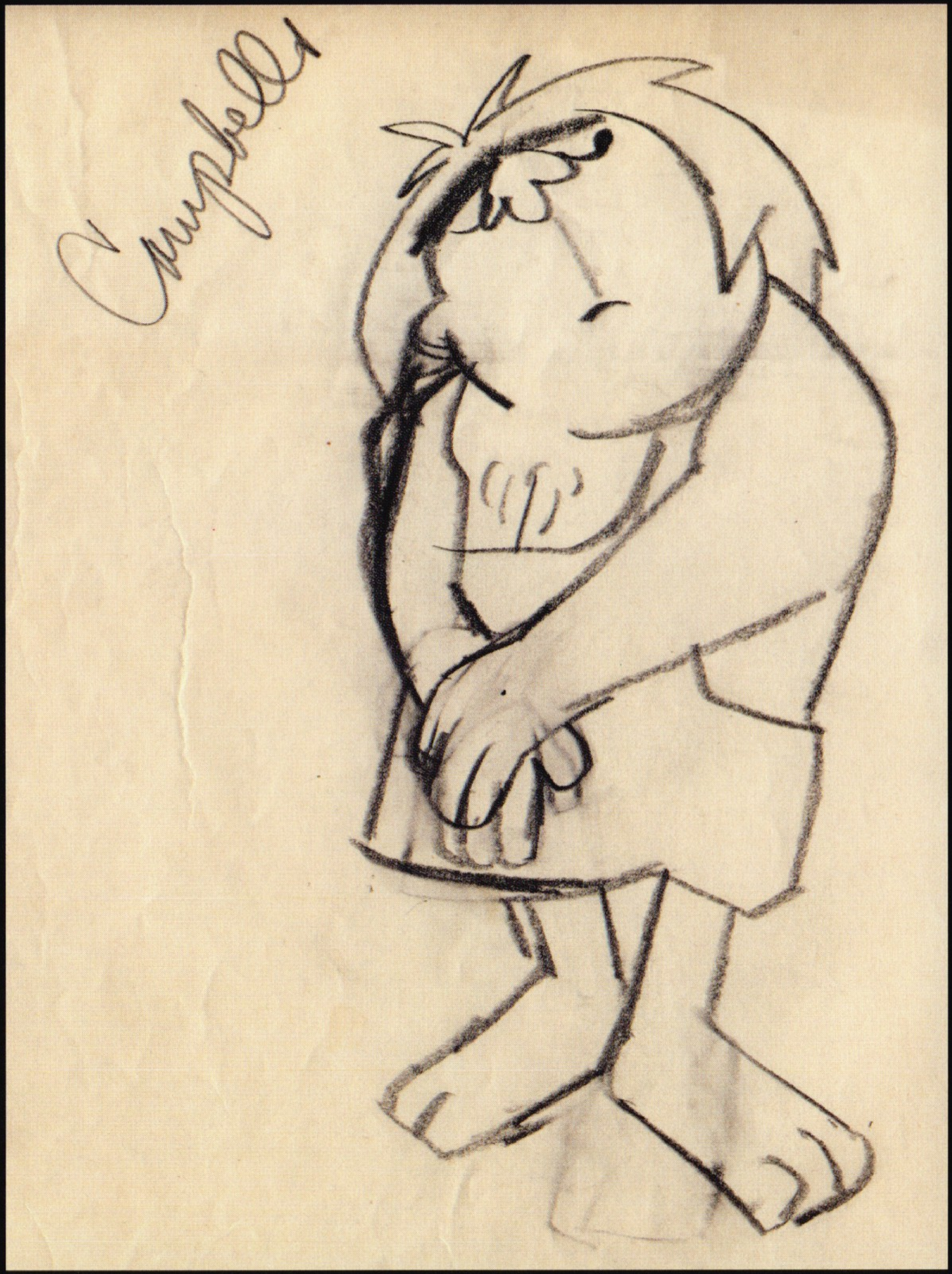
Storyboard panels from an unproduced commercial for Jax Beer. The drawing style in this board looks influenced by the work of *MAD* creator Harvey Kurtzman.



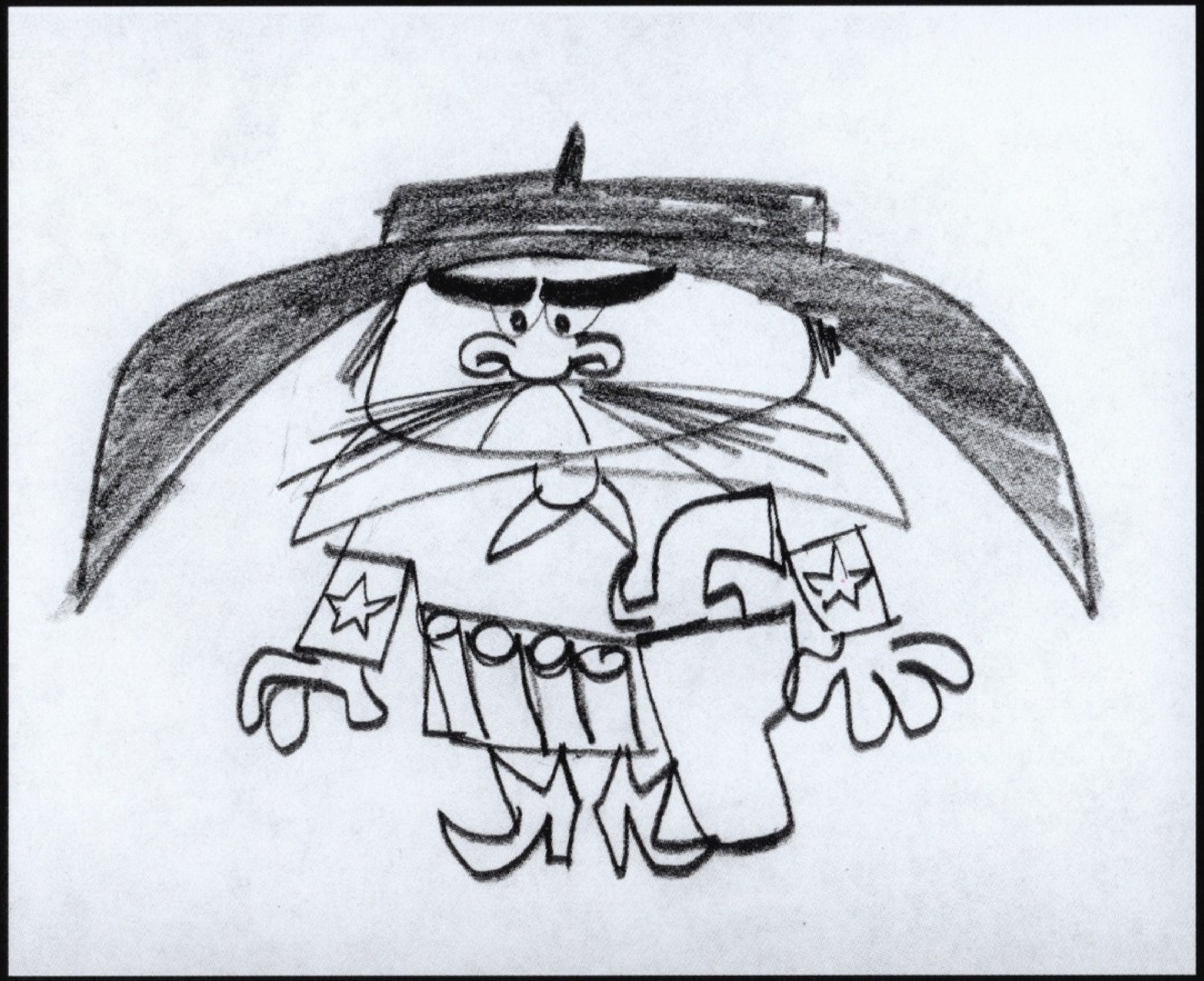
Bar-S Meats commercial
Designer: Ted Parmelee
Layout drawing







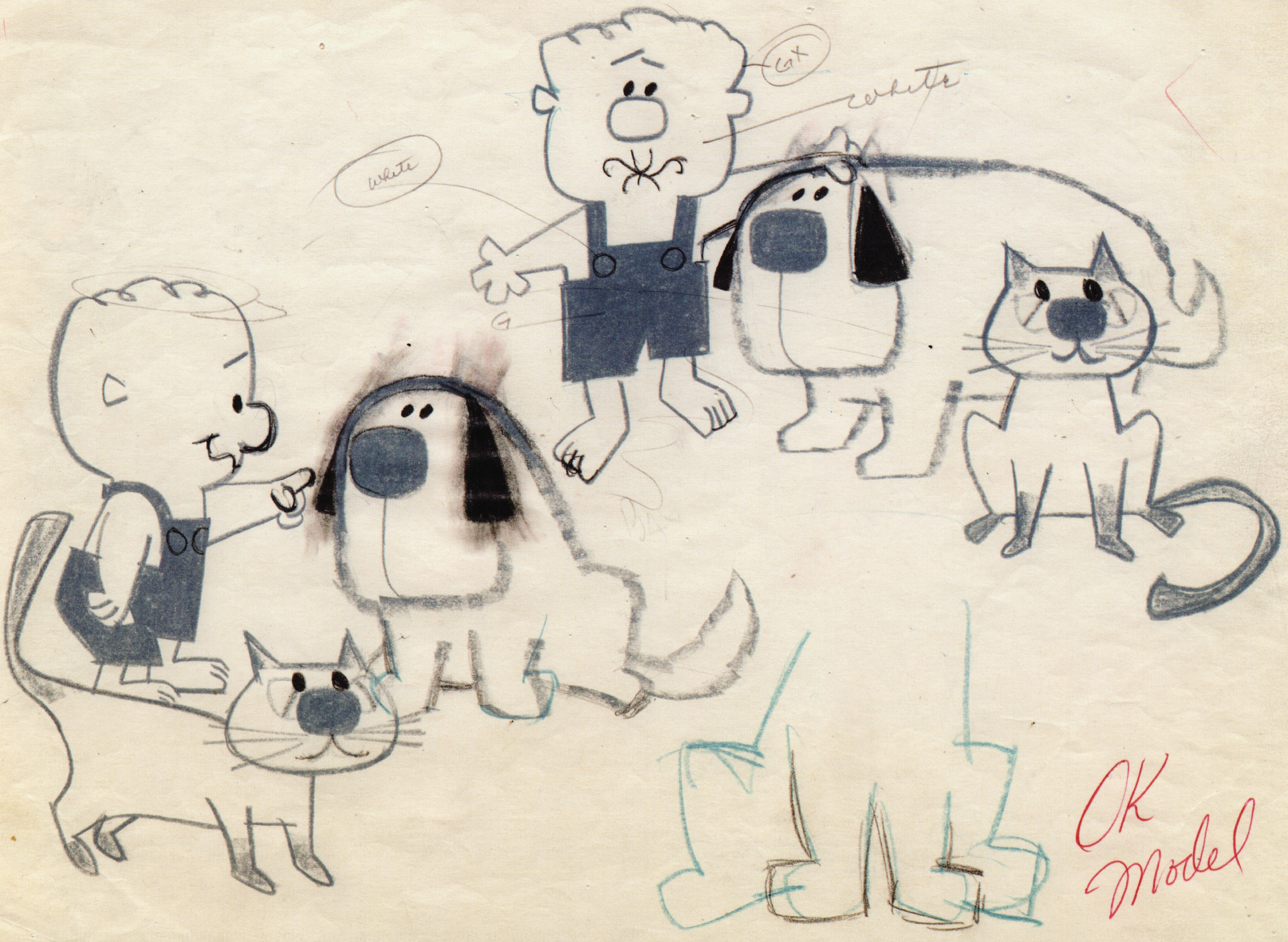
Campbell's commercial
Designer: Ted Parmelee
Model sheet drawings



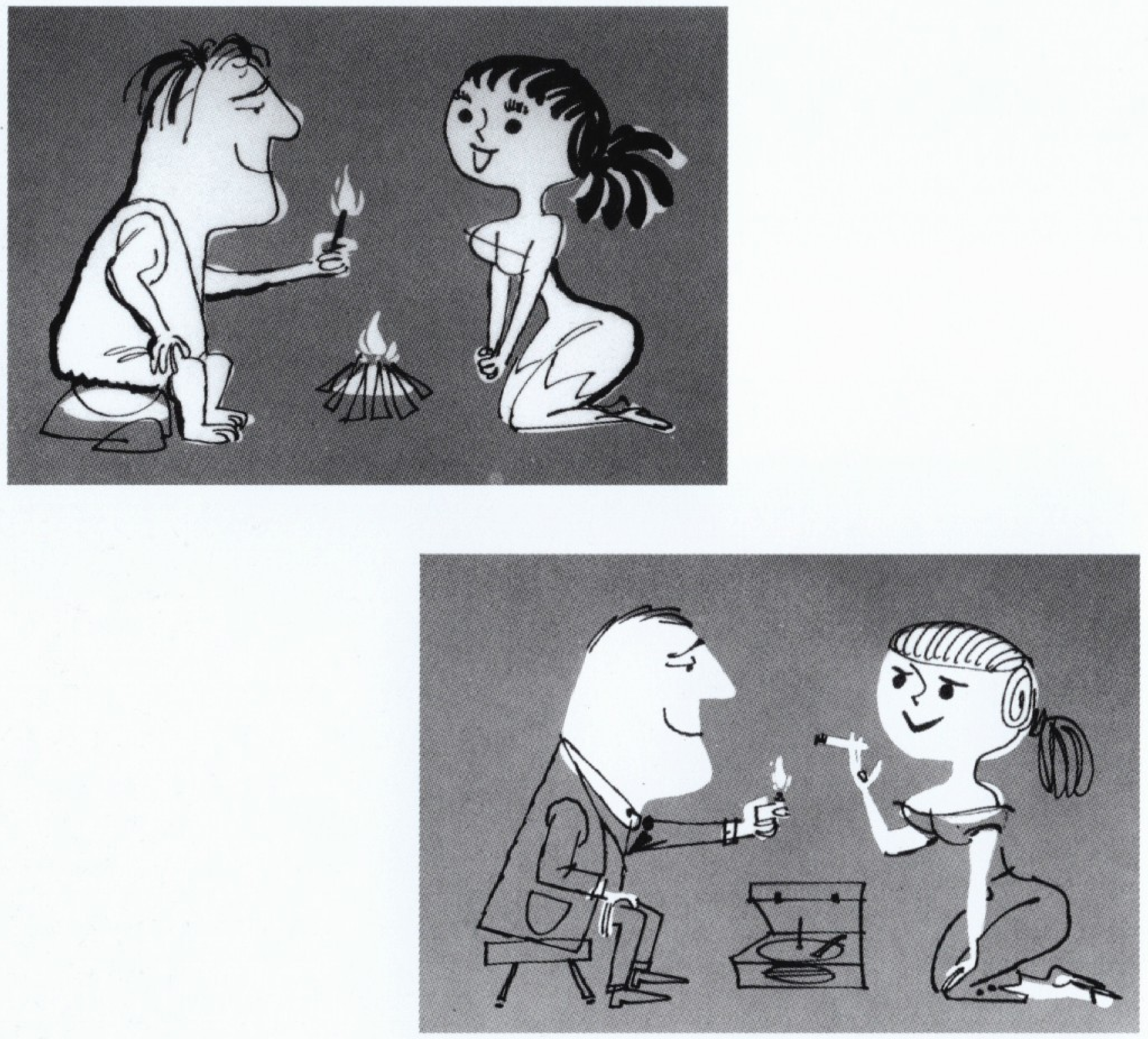
Character design from an unidentified commercial.

Opposite: **Kool-Aid commercial**
Designer unknown
Model sheet

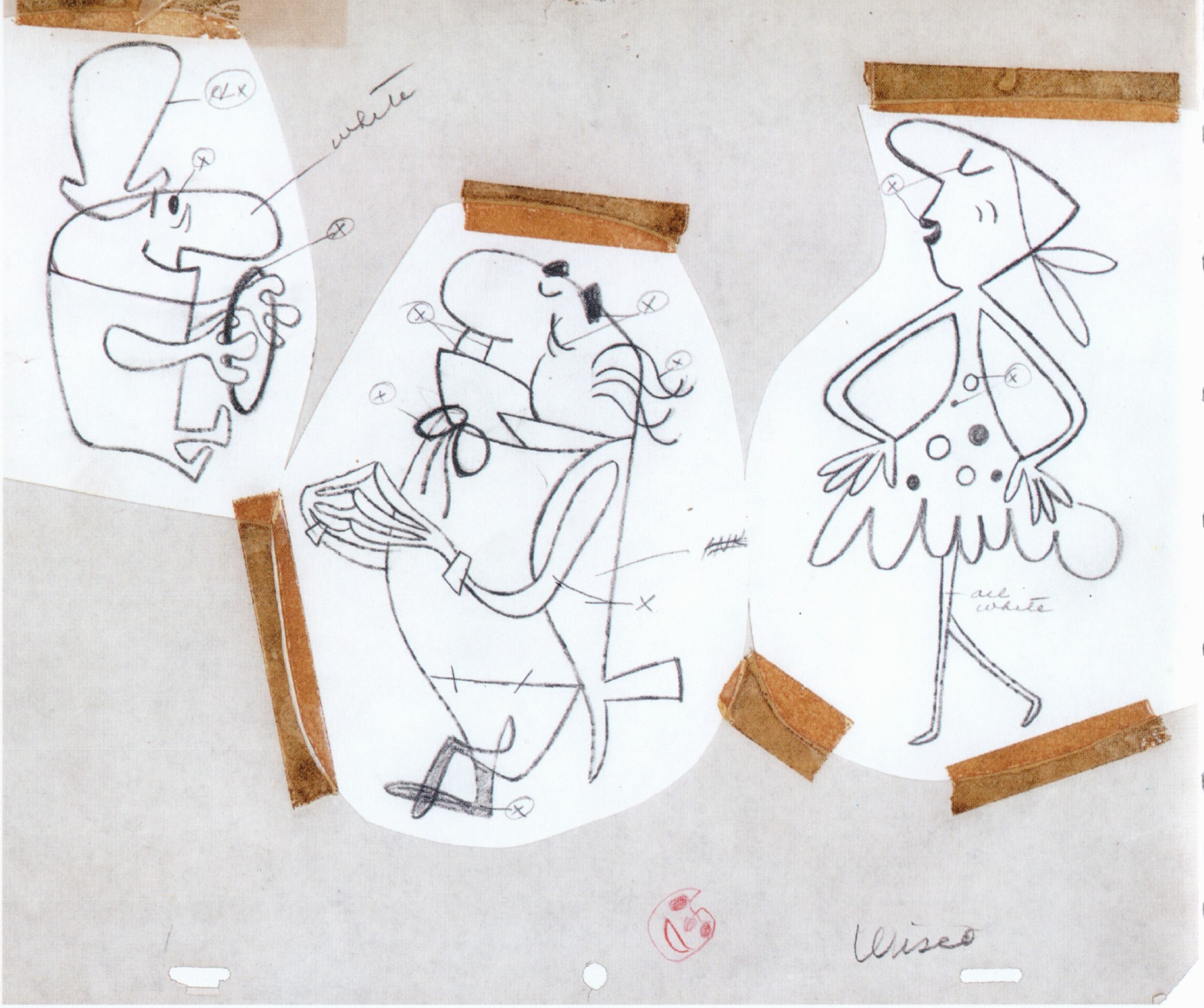
KOOL-AID-TITUS


GX
white
white
G

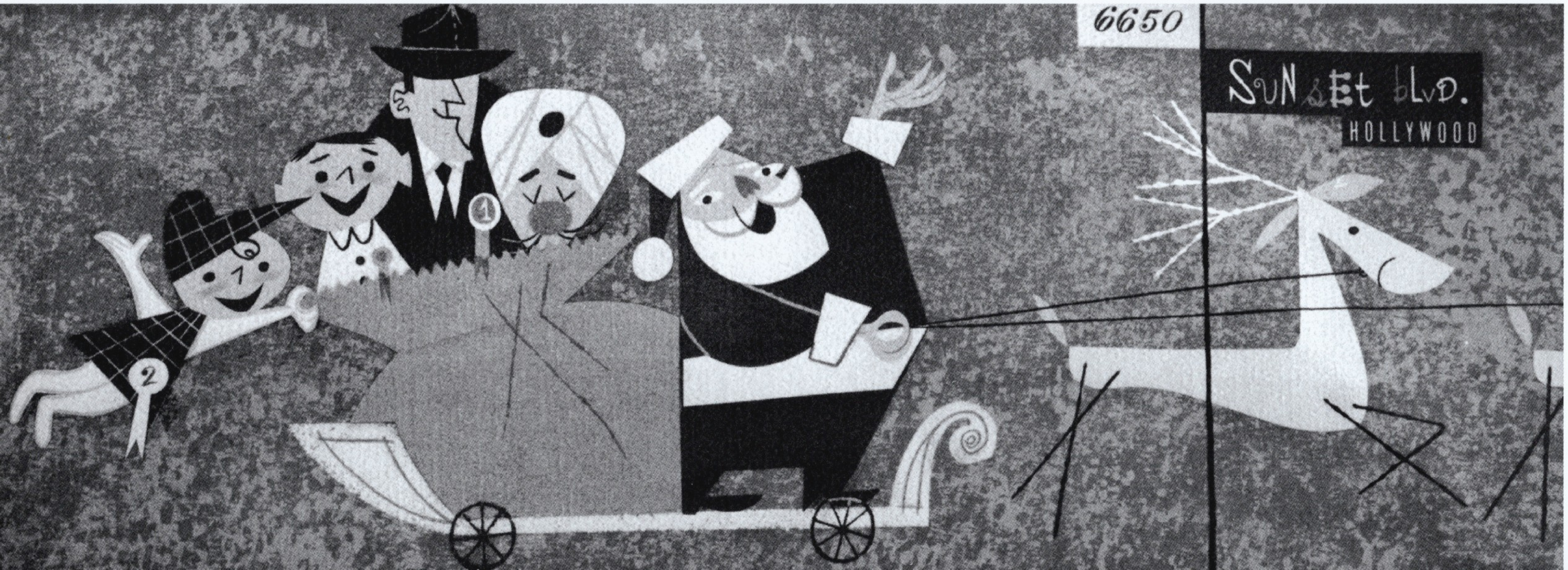
OK Model



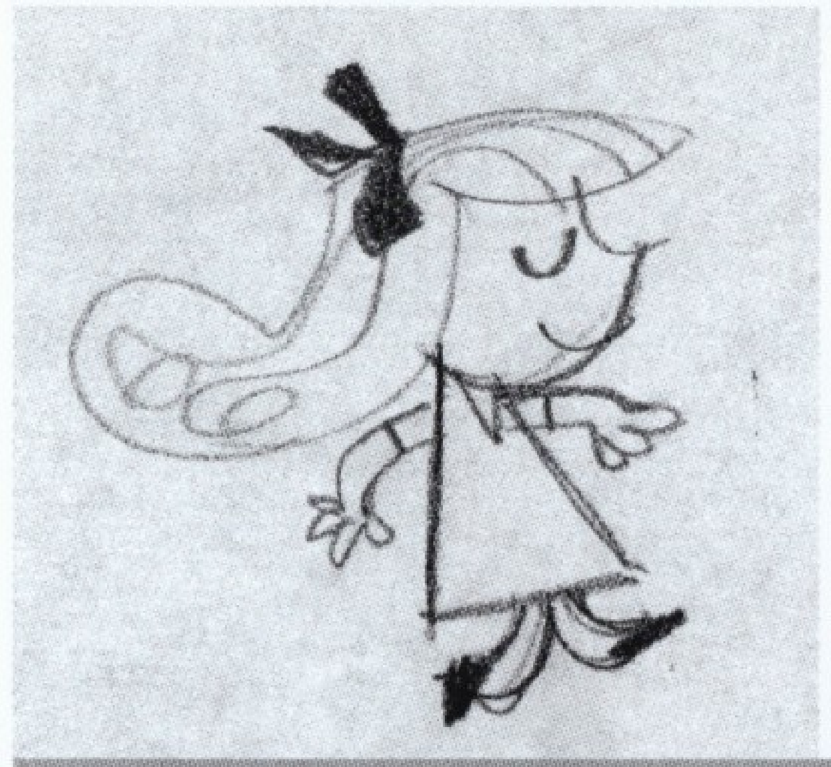
L&M Cigarettes commercial
Designer unknown
Character concepts

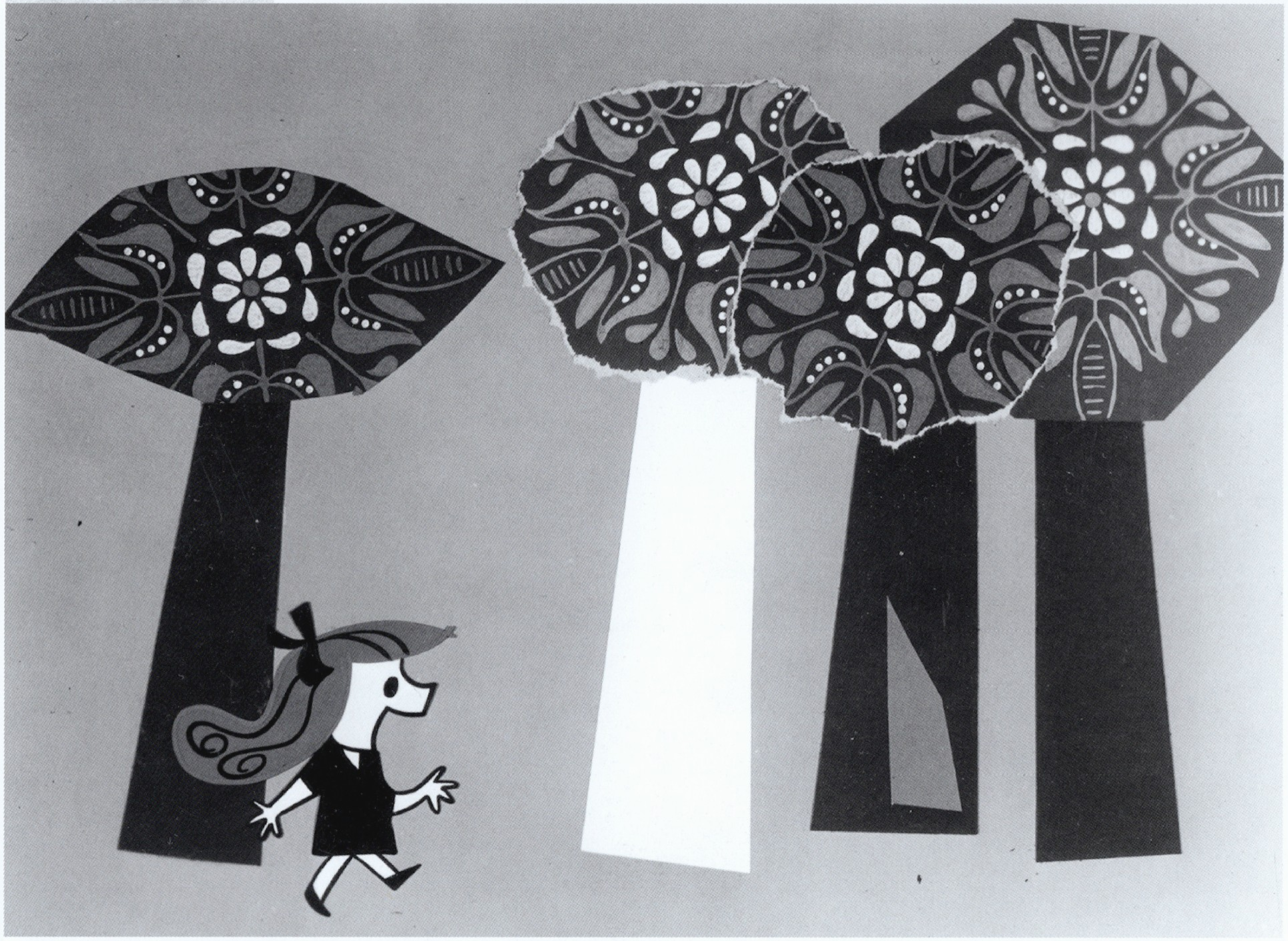

RLX
white
all white
Wisco

Wisco Gasoline commercial
Designer: Ed Levitt
Model sheet

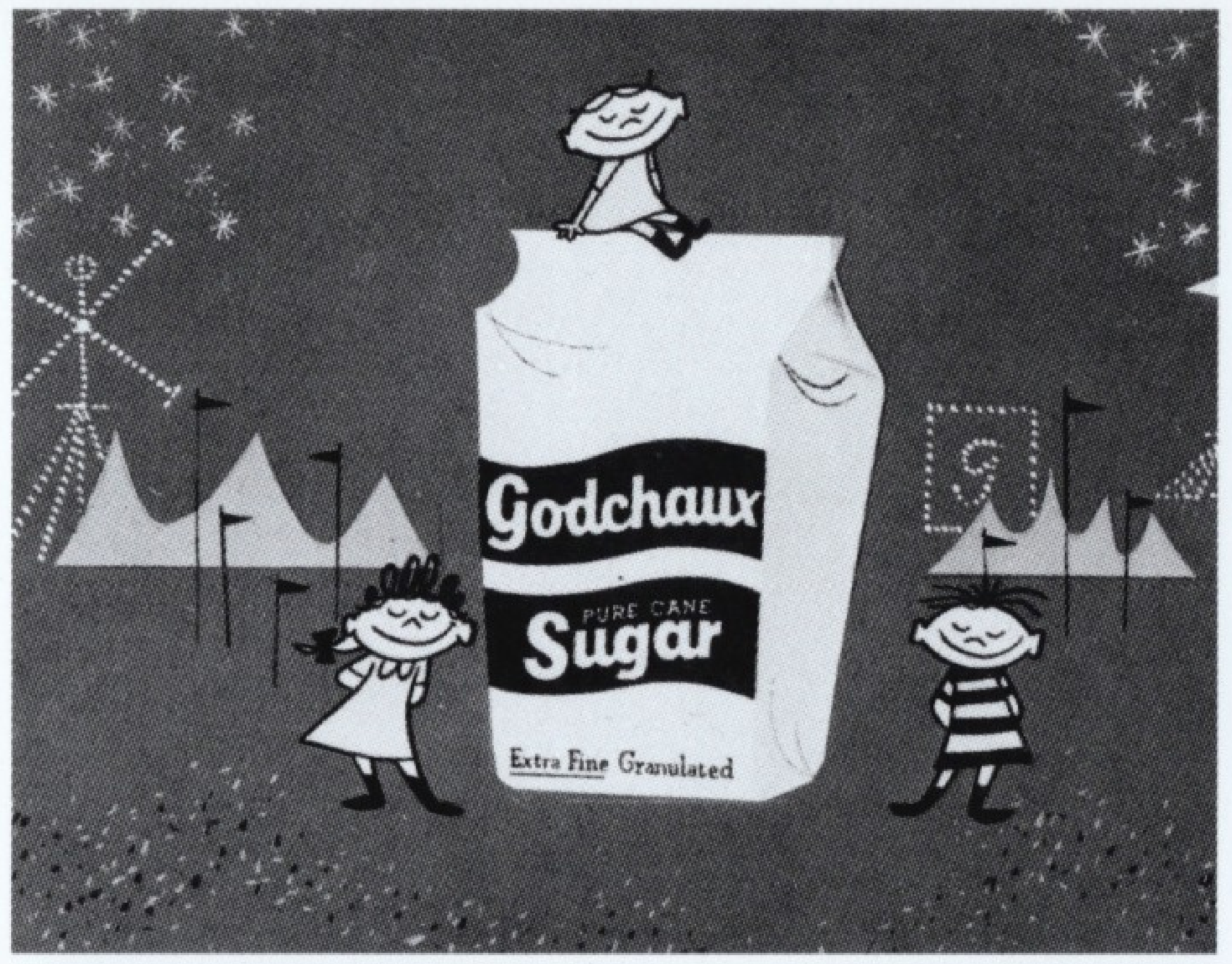

6650
SUNSET BLVD.
HOLLYWOOD
1
2

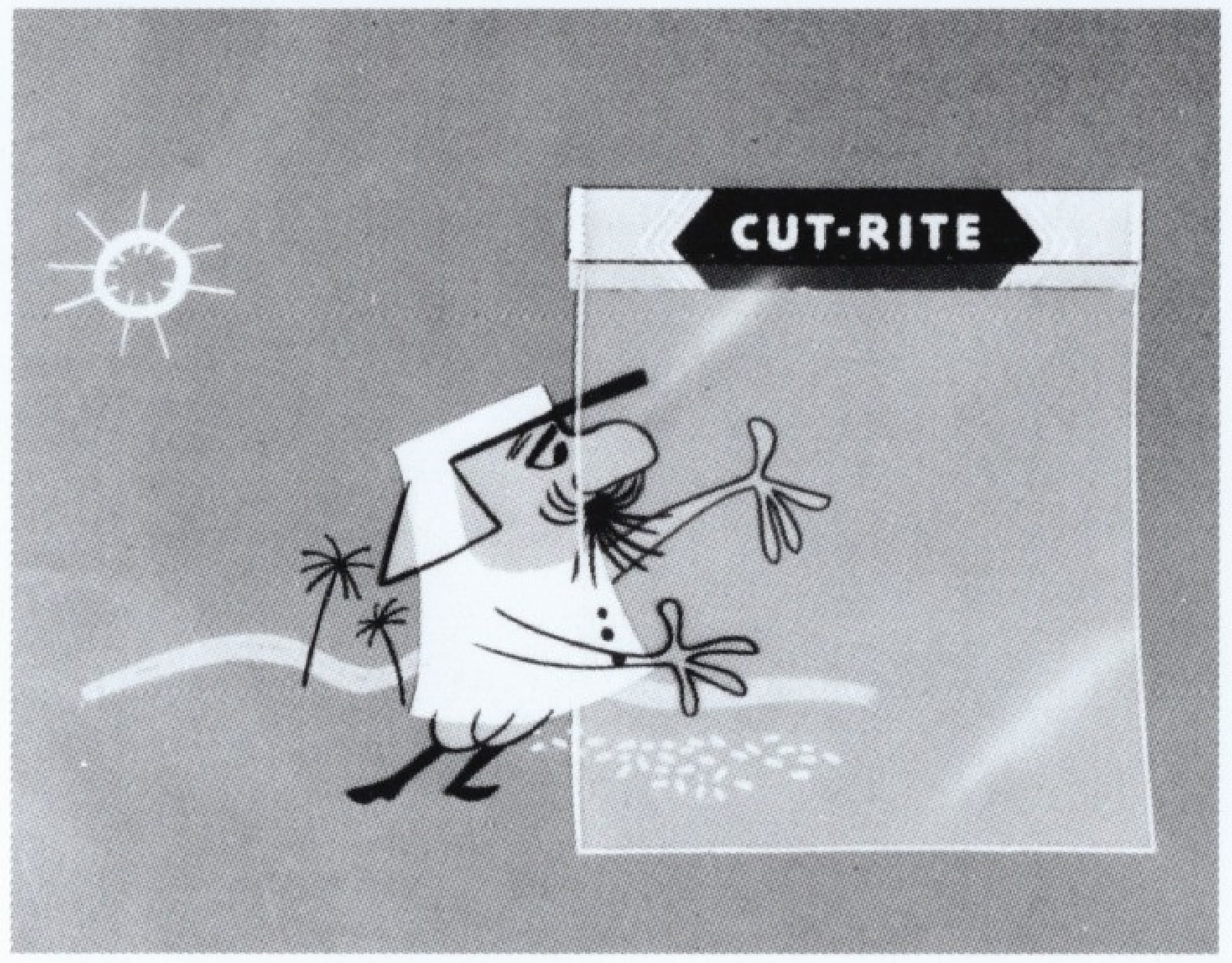
Studio Christmas card
by Norm Gottfredson.

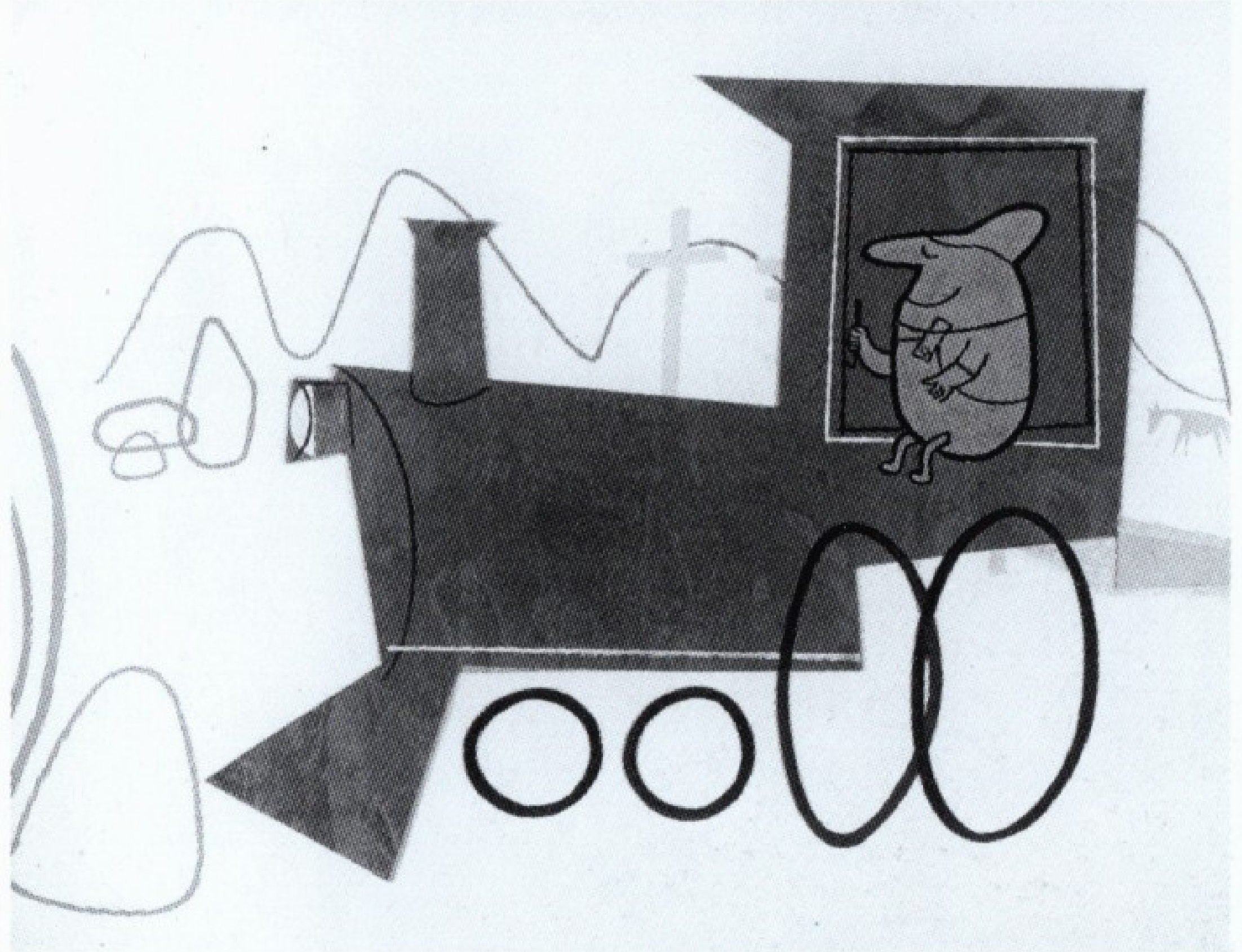


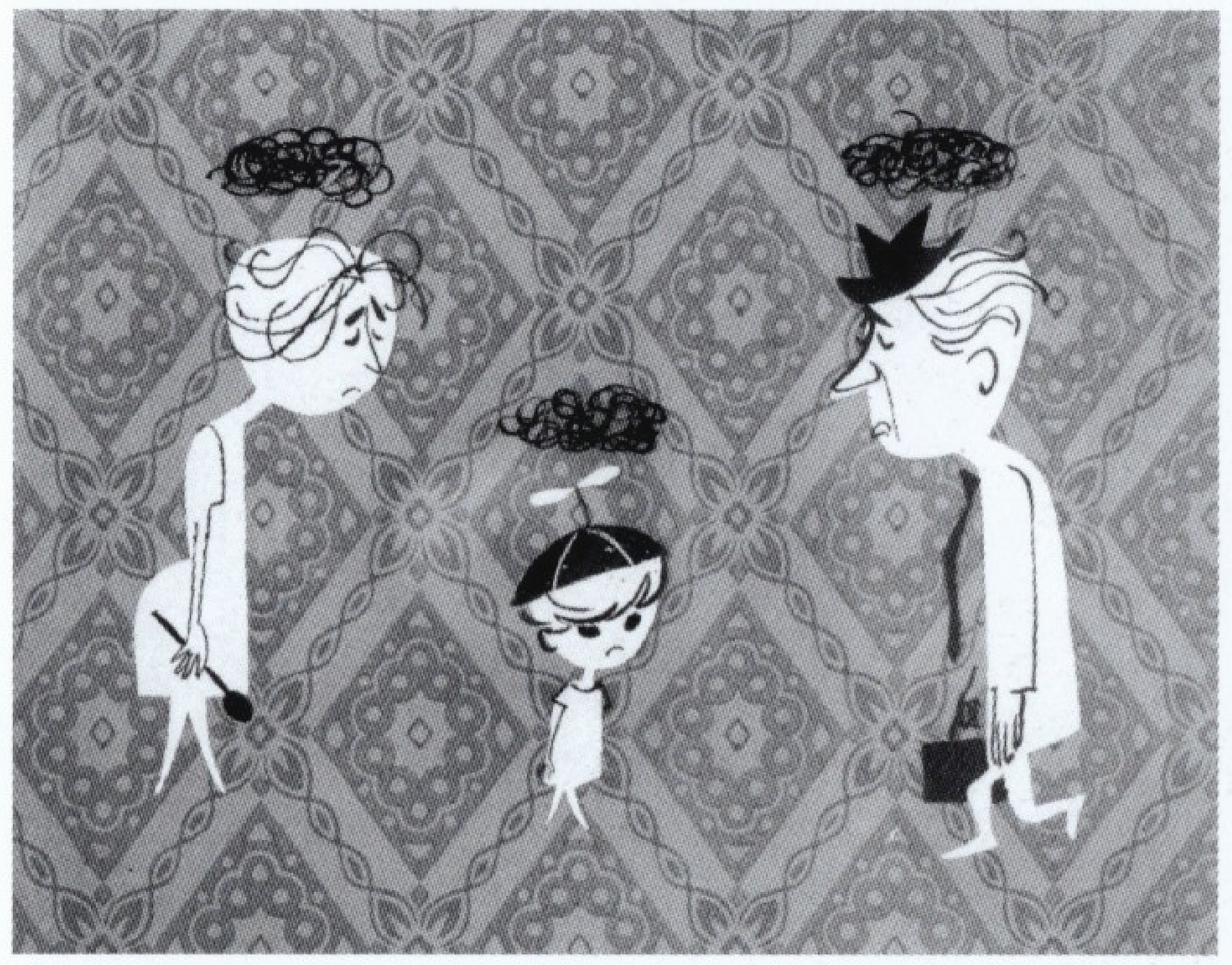


An unidentified commercial directed and designed by John Hubley. The backgrounds, cut out of gift wrapping paper, were designed by Norm Gottfredson.


Godchaux
PURE CANE
Sugar
Extra Fine Granulated



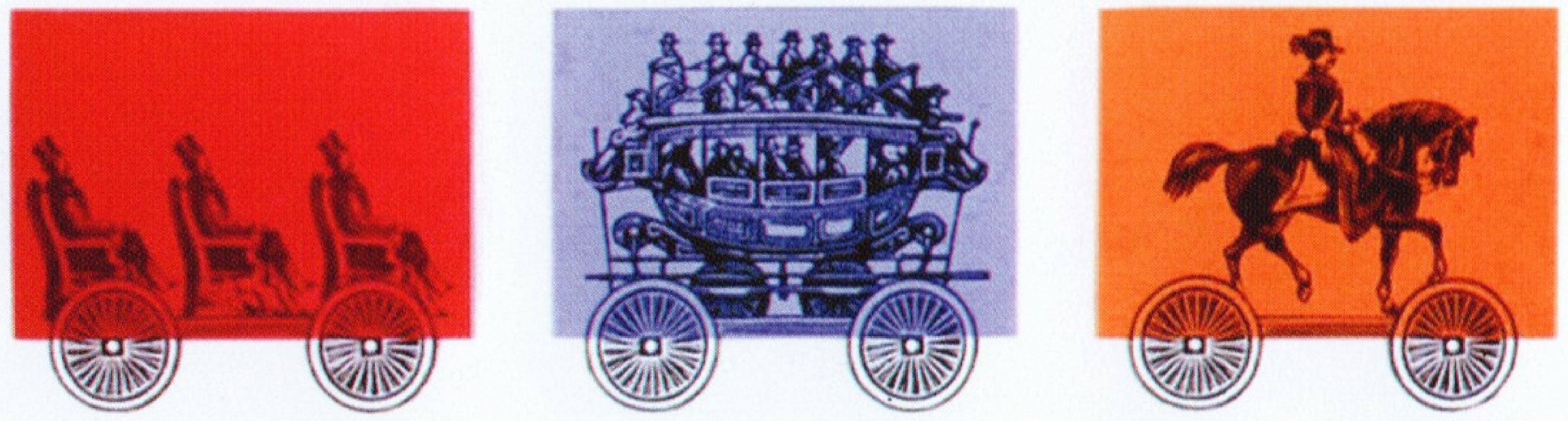




Stills from various Patin commercials (from top to bottom):
Godchaux Sugar
(Designer: Tom Oreb)
Cut-Rite Wax Paper
(Designer unknown)
UNIDENTIFIED COMMERCIAL
(Designer: Ed Levitt)
UNIDENTIFIED COMMERCIAL
(Designer unknown)

S

SHAMUS CULHANE PRODUCTIONS



Above and opposite: ***Around the World in 80 Days* (1956)**
Director: Bill Hurtz
Film stills

The film's lead characters were reimagined as graphic symbols: an always-running top-hatted pocket watch for Phineas Fogg; a penny-farthing bicycle for his jack-of-all-trades valet, Passepartout; and a floating head covered in veils for the princess.

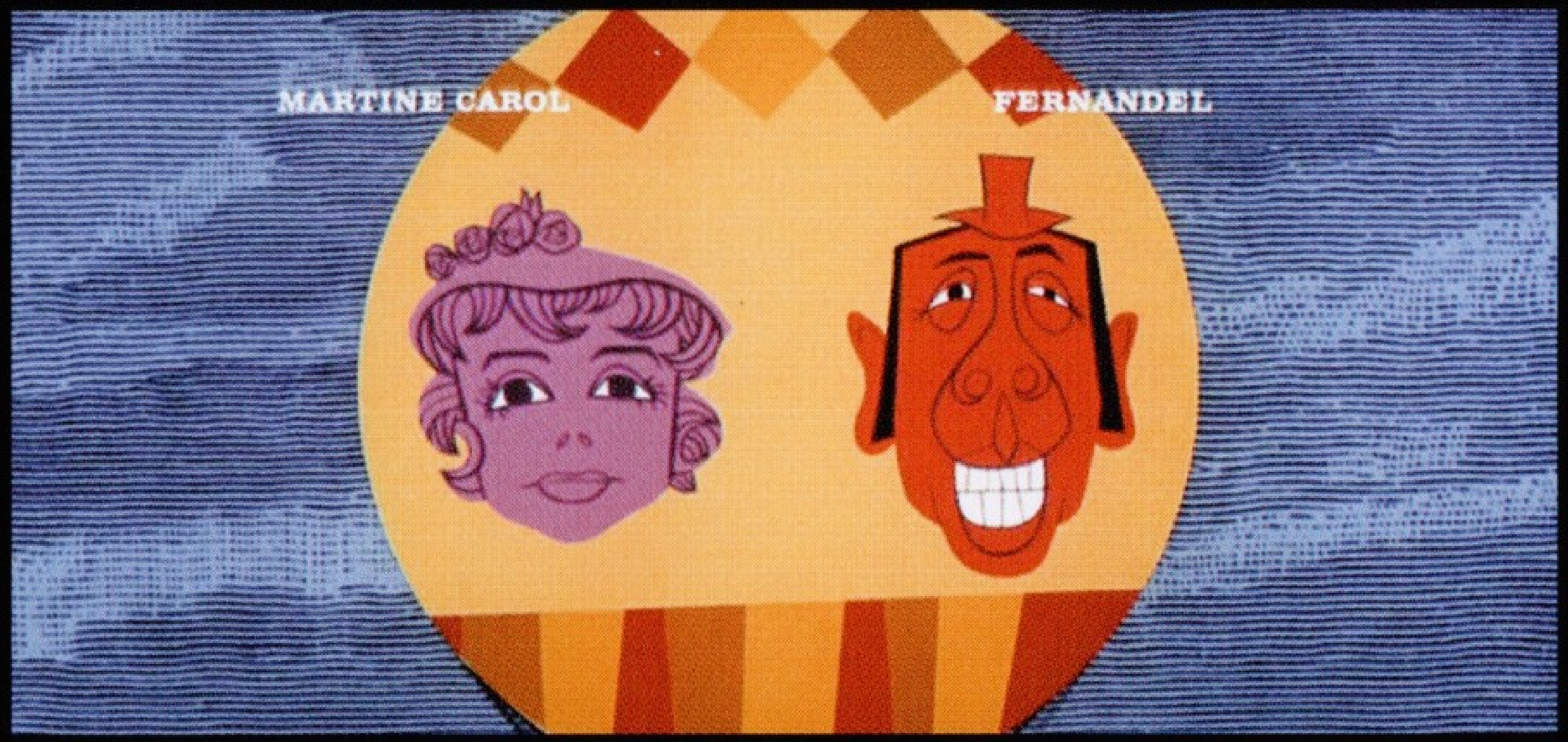
Veteran animator-director Shamus Culhane (1908–1996) started his own New York–based commercial studio in 1948. He opened a Los Angeles branch in the mid-1950s, assigning UPA director-designer Bill Hurtz to head up the office. Culhane's West Coast studio generally produced the firm's more graphically adventurous offerings, including three Bell Science specials (*Hemo the Magnificent*, 1956, *The Strange Case of the Cosmic Rays*, 1957, and *Unchained Goddess*, 1958), and the six-and-a-half-minute animated epilogue for *Around the World in 80 Days* (1956), all of which Hurtz directed. The design of the *Around the World in 80 Days* sequence was credited to West Coast graphic designer Saul Bass (1920–1996). Bass, whose other pacesetting movie title work during the 1950s included *The Man with the Golden Arm* (1955), *Vertigo* (1958) and *Anatomy of a Murder* (1959), is almost single-handedly responsible for transforming the concept of film titles from an unimaginative and functional filmmaking element into a graphic device that evokes mood and atmosphere, and conditions audiences for the film that follows.

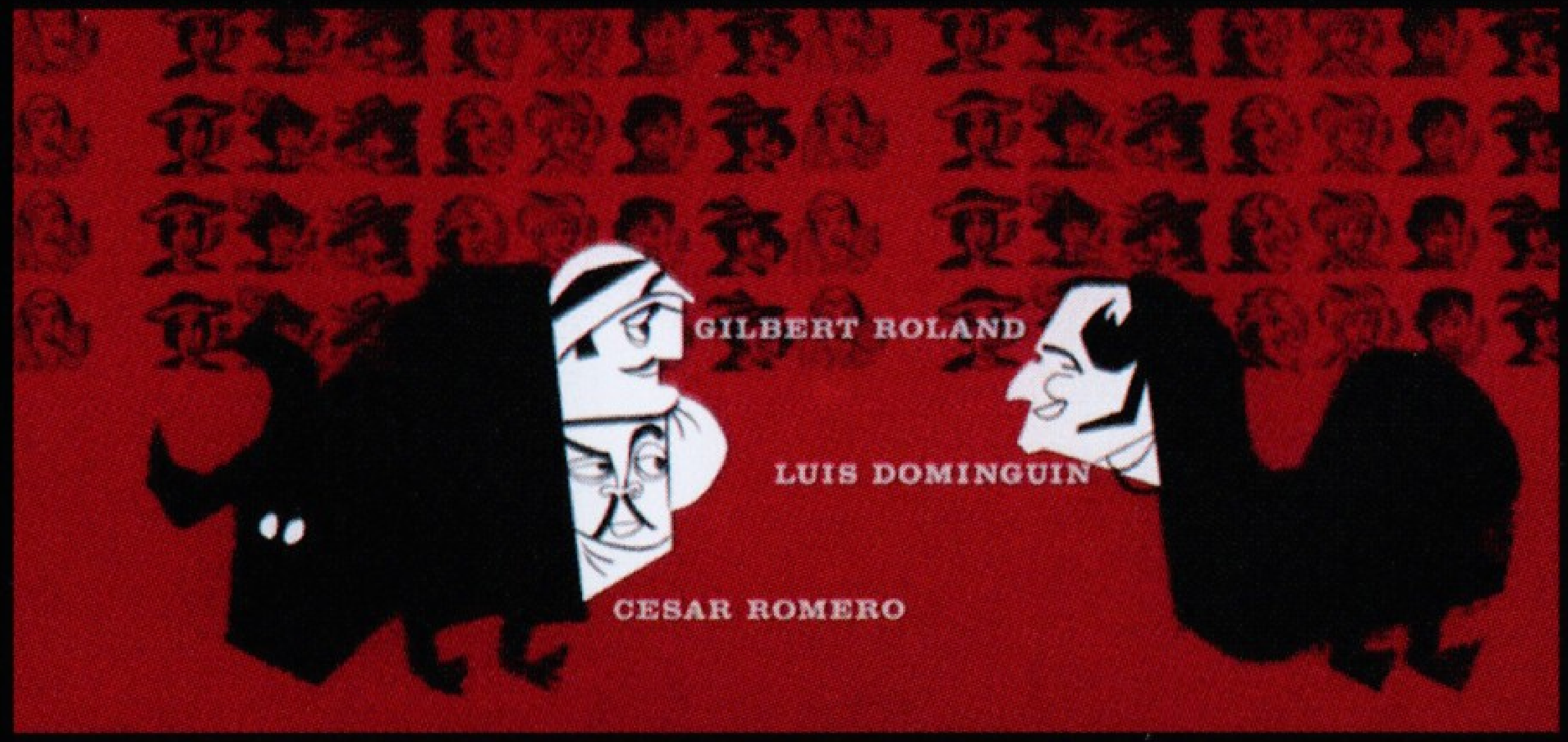
For Michael Anderson's *Around the World in 80 Days*, the challenge was to present the film's lengthy credits roll in a manner that would sustain the audience's interest. Bass's solution ingeniously recapitulated the film's three-hour story in cartoon form, wittily integrating the names of the actors into the visual field and allowing them to be identified roughly in order of location and appearance in the film. While the actual animation element in the cartoon is quite limited—elephants and bulls don't walk; rather, their highly abstracted symbols glide across screen with their legs remaining stationary—it is easy to overlook the lack of animation because the sequence is so densely packed with visuals, employing a combination of vintage illustrative drawings; caricatures; clever cartoon forms; and striking, unrealistic color combinations, such as candy-colored train cars set against a stark black-and-white background. Far from an anticlimatic finish, the titles reportedly evoked special applause from audiences during its original theatrical engagement.

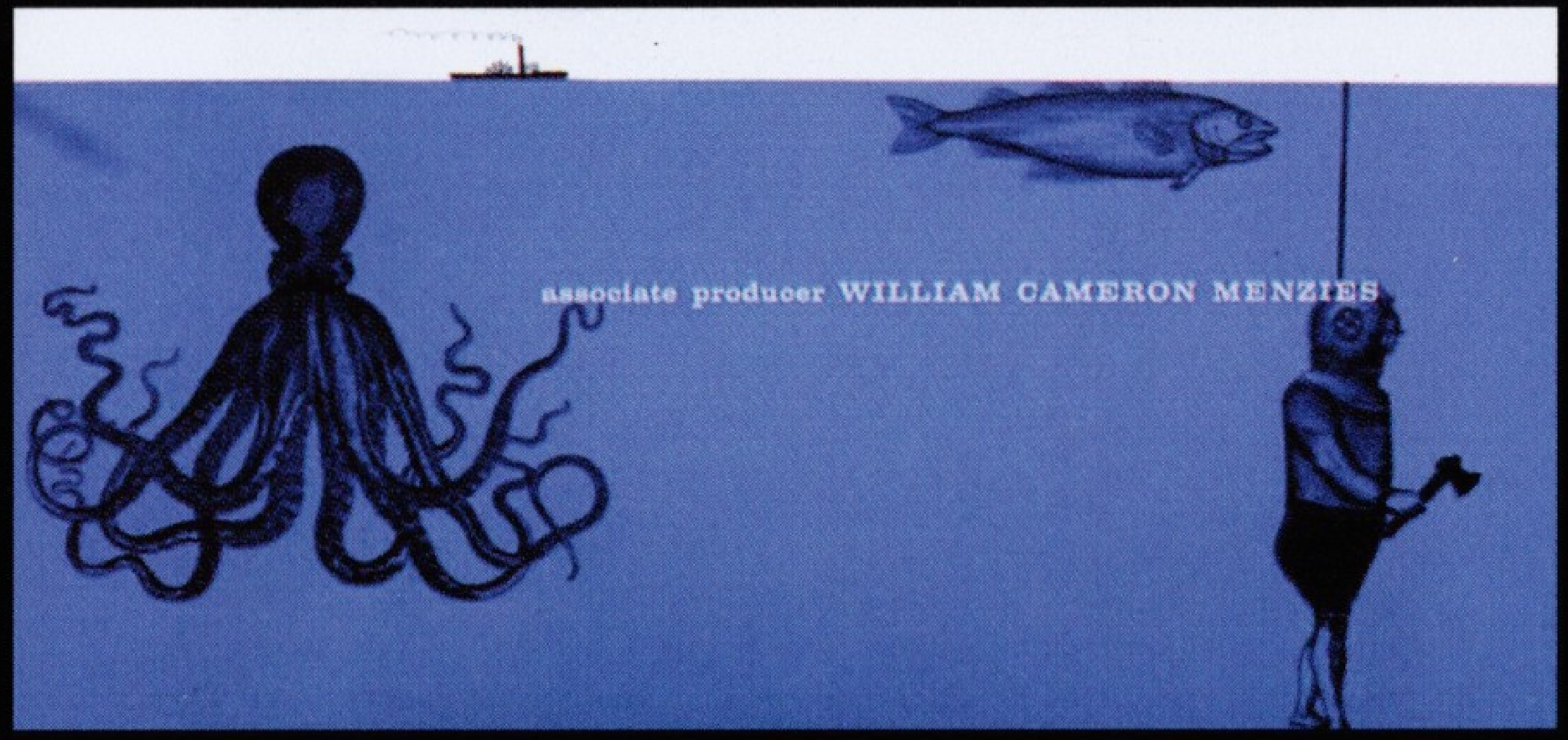
Some question remains to this day, however, as to how much of the epilogue's design originated with Bass and how much came from other artists. Though the sequence was produced by Shamus Culhane Productions, the storyboards had been made by another Los Angeles studio, Earl Klein's Animation Inc. According to Klein, his studio had been commissioned by Bass to create the boards with little oversight from Bass himself:

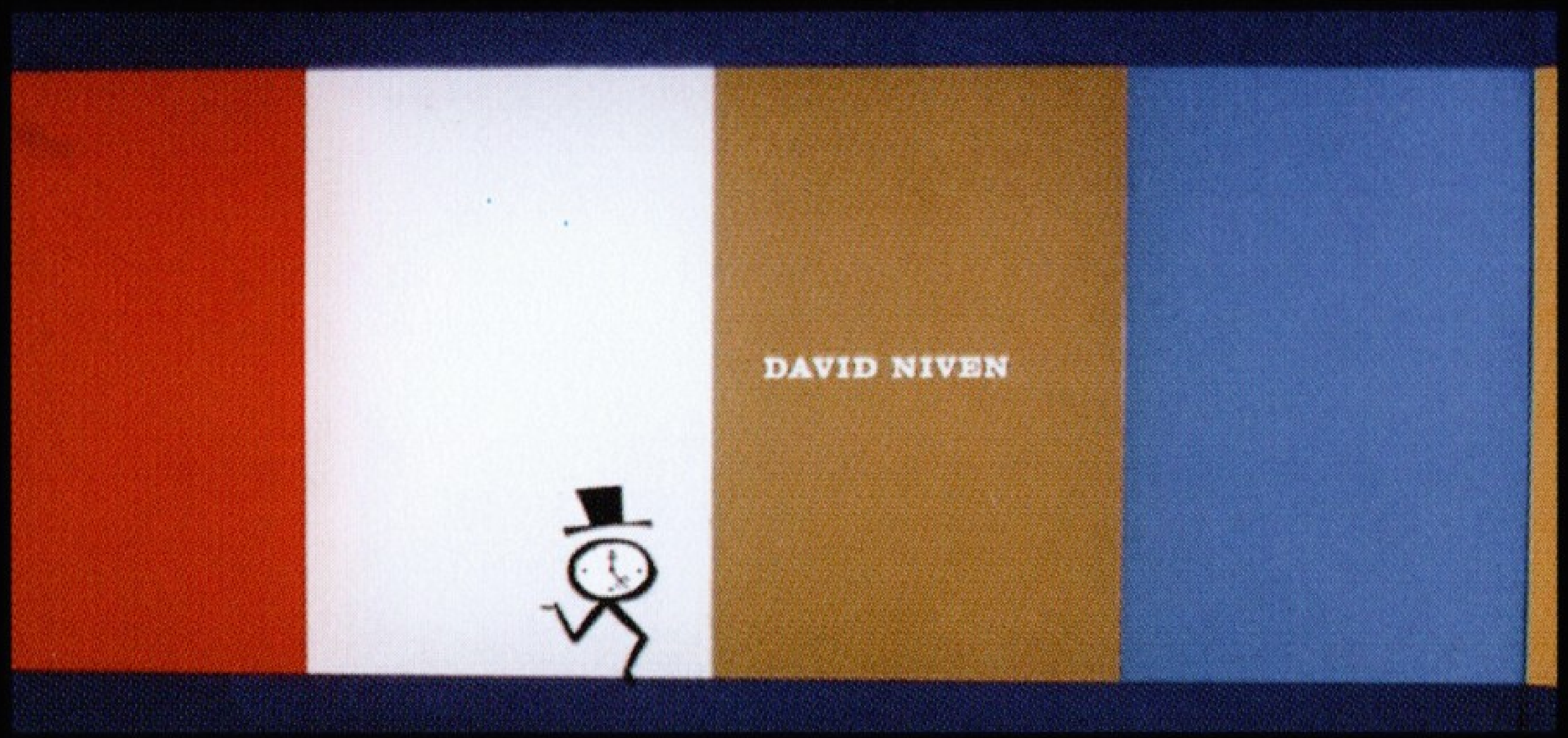
> [Bass] came in and said, "Look, I have to go to Europe, and Mike Todd has this job he wants done. Do you think you could work on the storyboard for the titles, and then when I come back, in three or four weeks, could you have some roughs to show me." So we did, and when he came back, he loved them, and told me to go ahead and do the comprehensives on the whole thing.

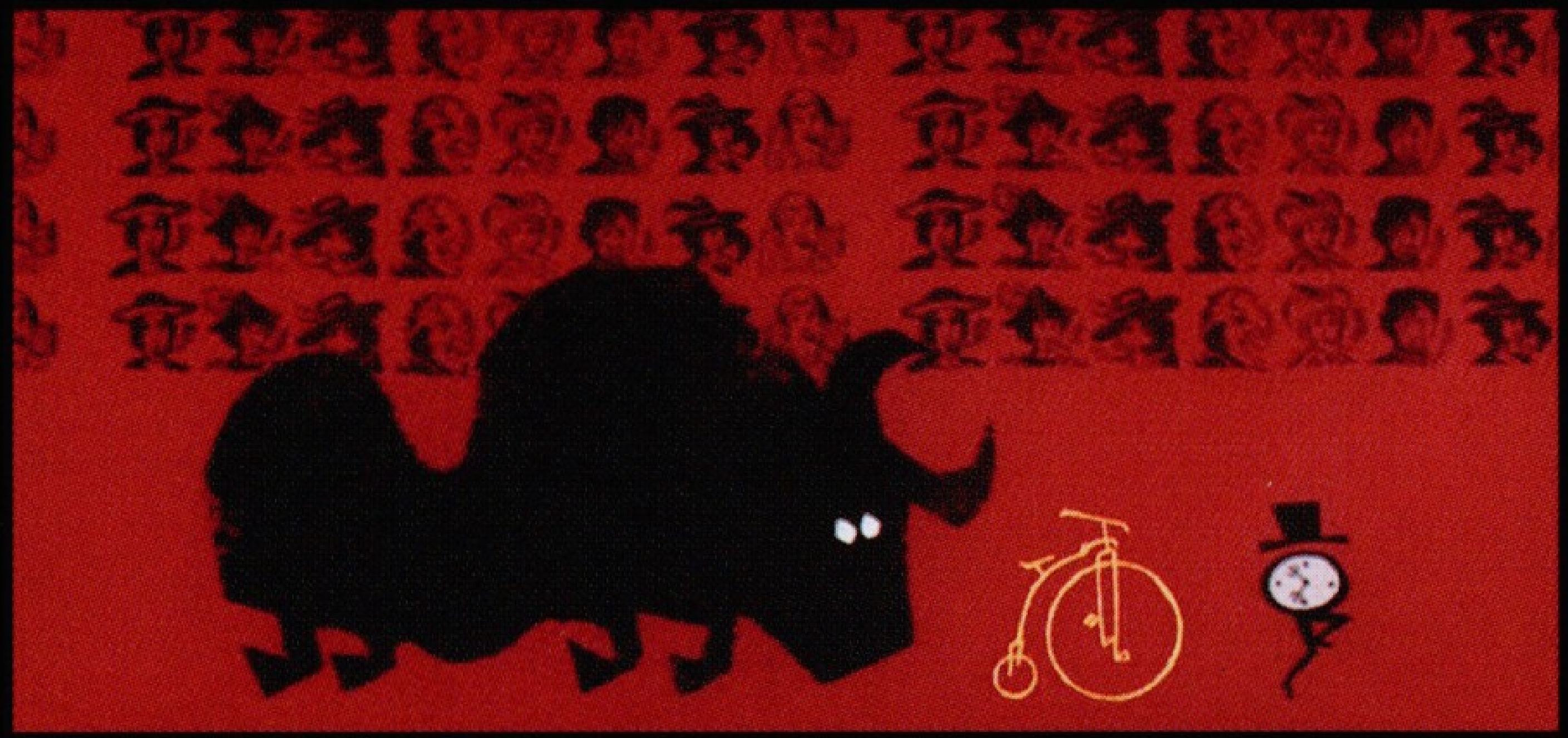
A financial disagreement between Klein and the film's producer, Michael Todd, eventually led to Shamus Culhane receiving the animation job, but Culhane produced it using Animation Inc.'s storyboards. When the film was released in 1956, Klein filed a $250,000 plagiarism suit against the Michael Todd Company for not properly crediting his studio's work on the film. An October 1958 news clipping in *Art Direction* magazine reported that the suit was withdrawn after the Todd company acknowledged that "although screen credit had properly been given to Saul Bass, Animation Inc. had also made a great contribution," and that "all parties acknowledged the work of [Animation Inc.'s] artists Ron Maidenberg, Bob Curtis and Barry Geller."

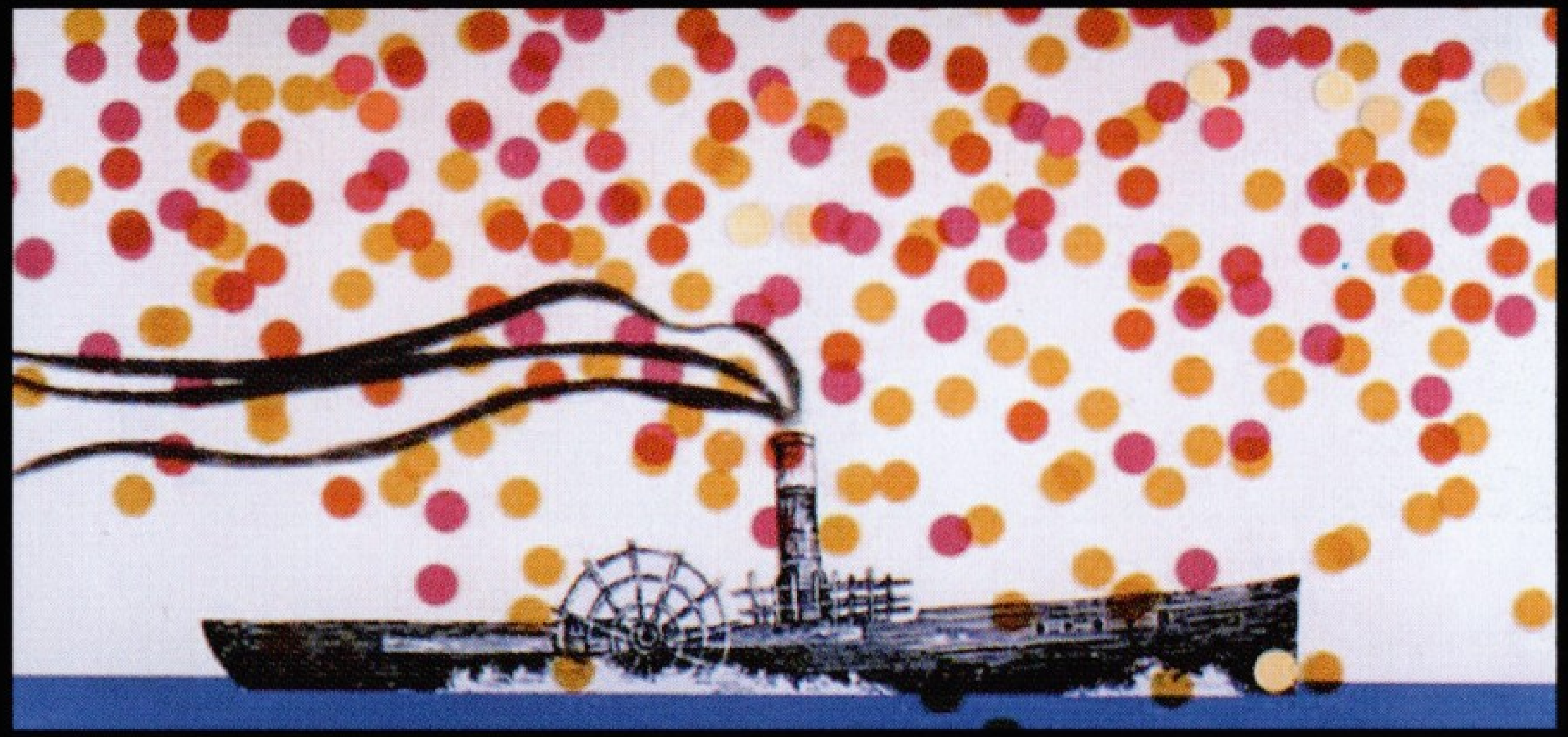

MARTINE CAROL
FERNANDEL

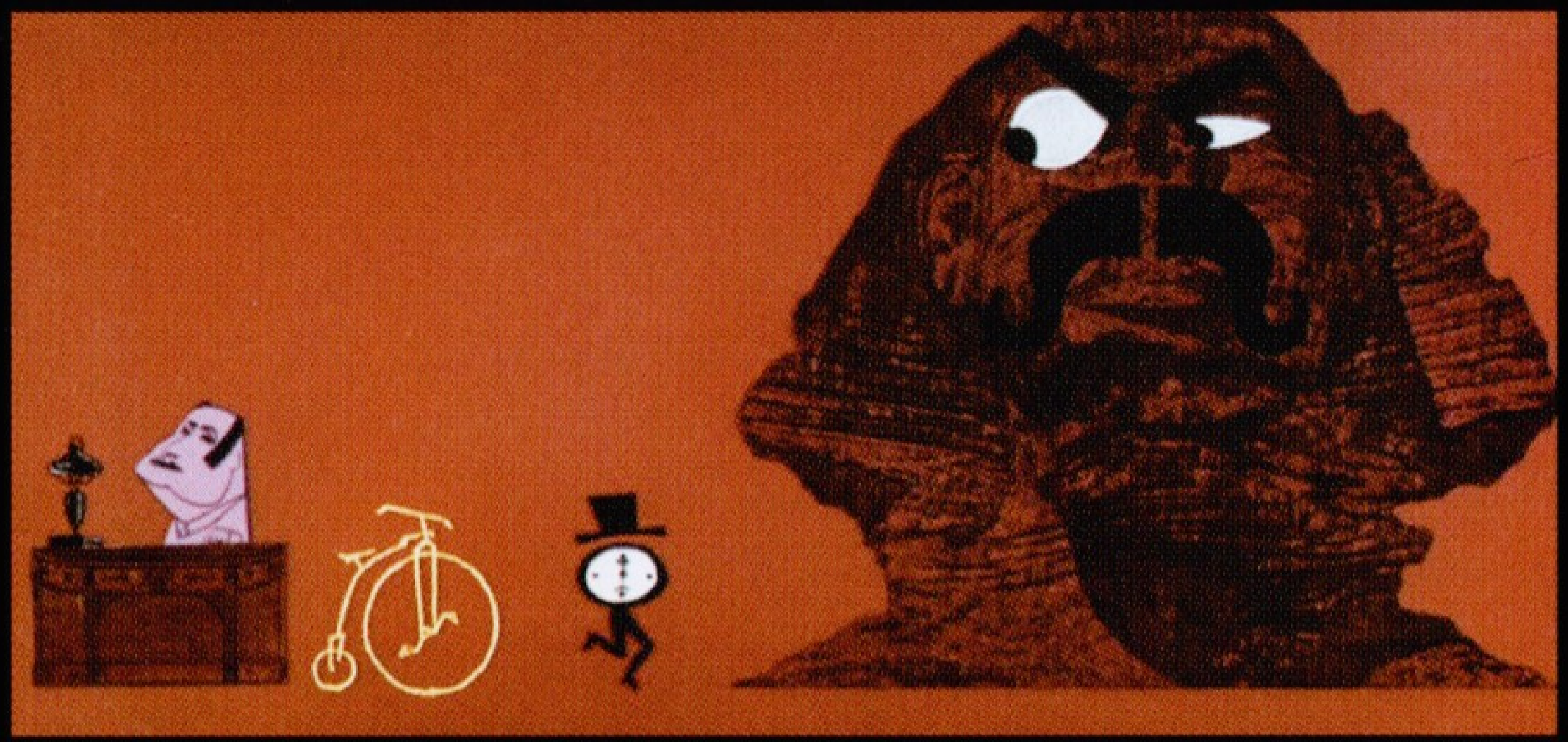

GILBERT ROLAND
LUIS DOMINGUIN
CESAR ROMERO

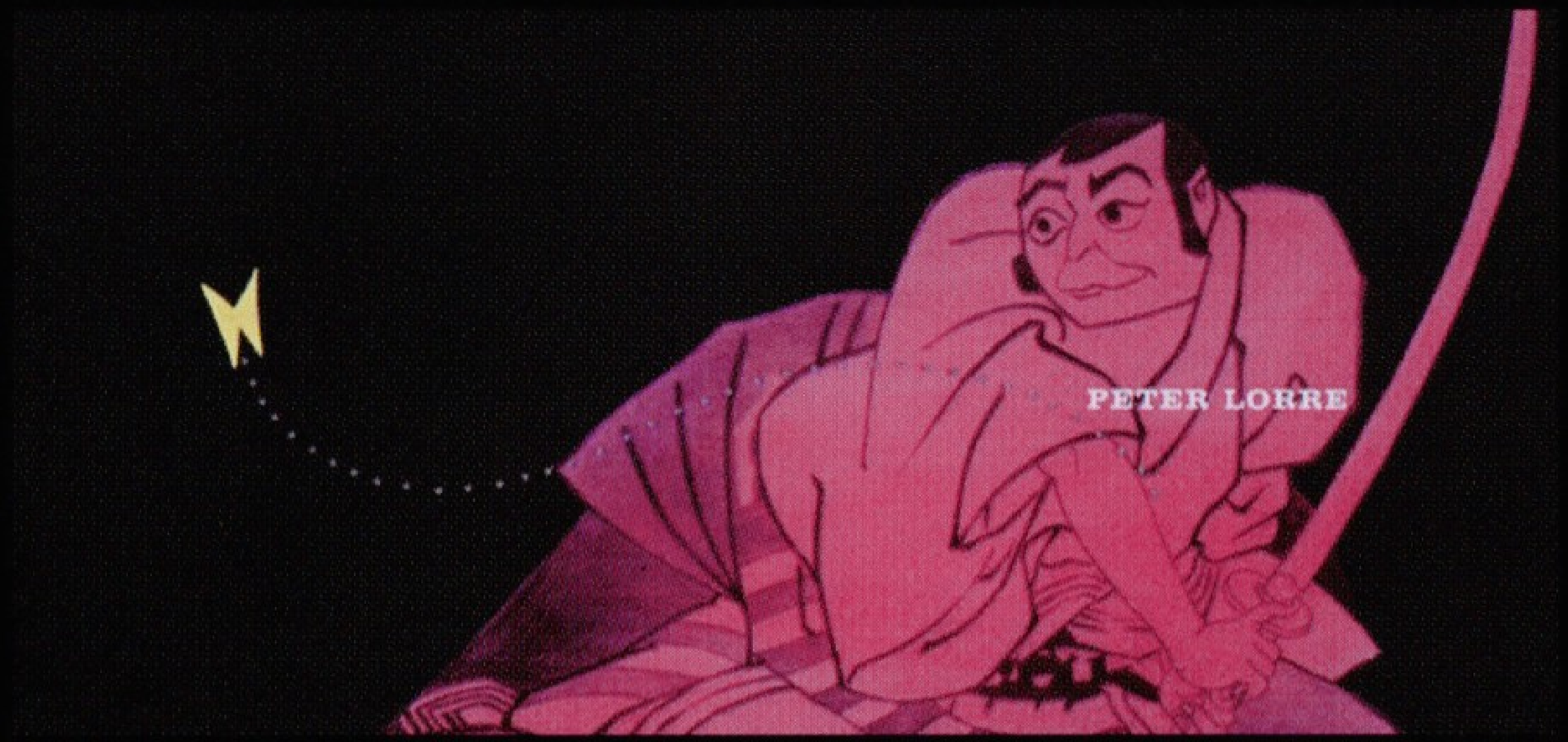

associate producer WILLIAM CAMERON MENZIES

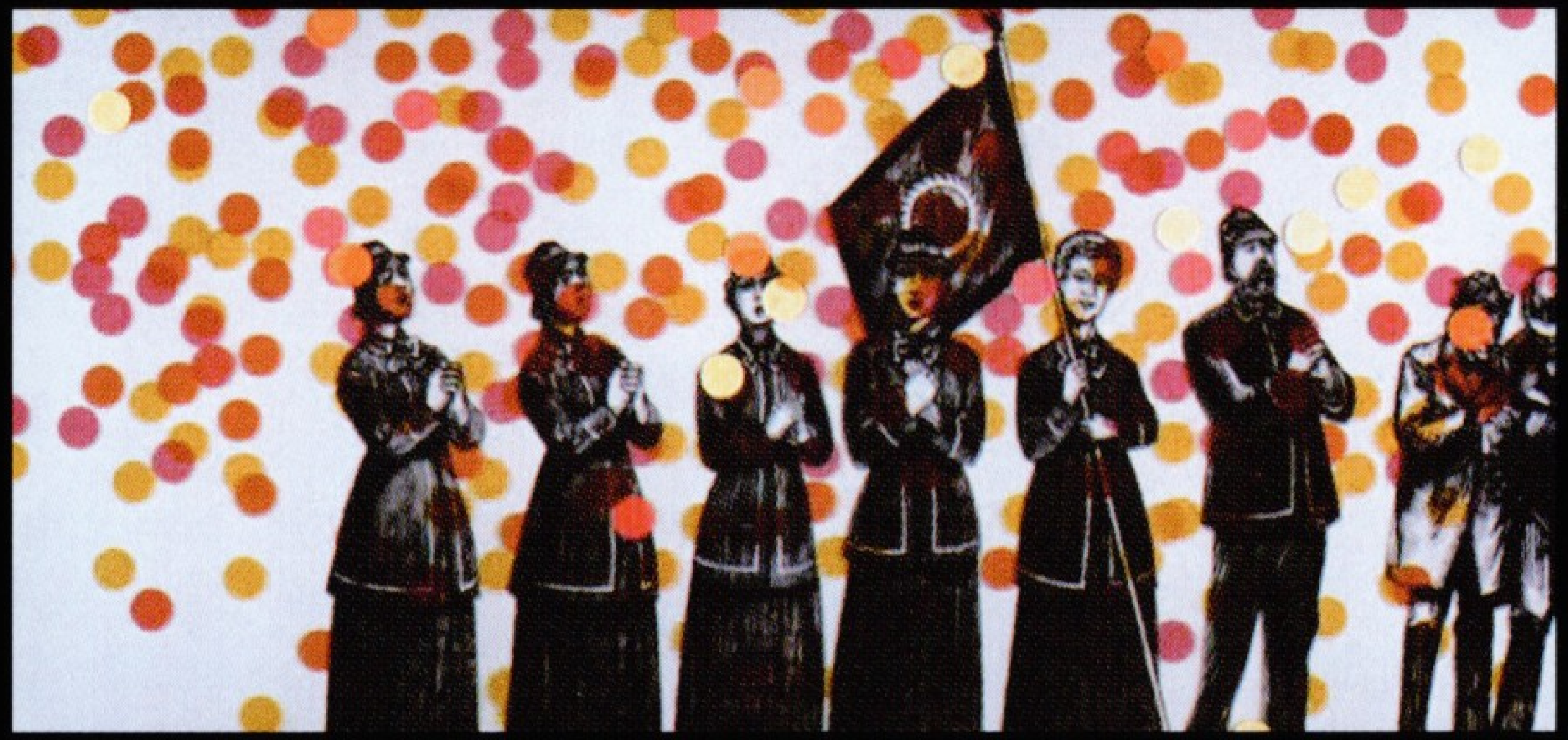

DAVID NIVEN

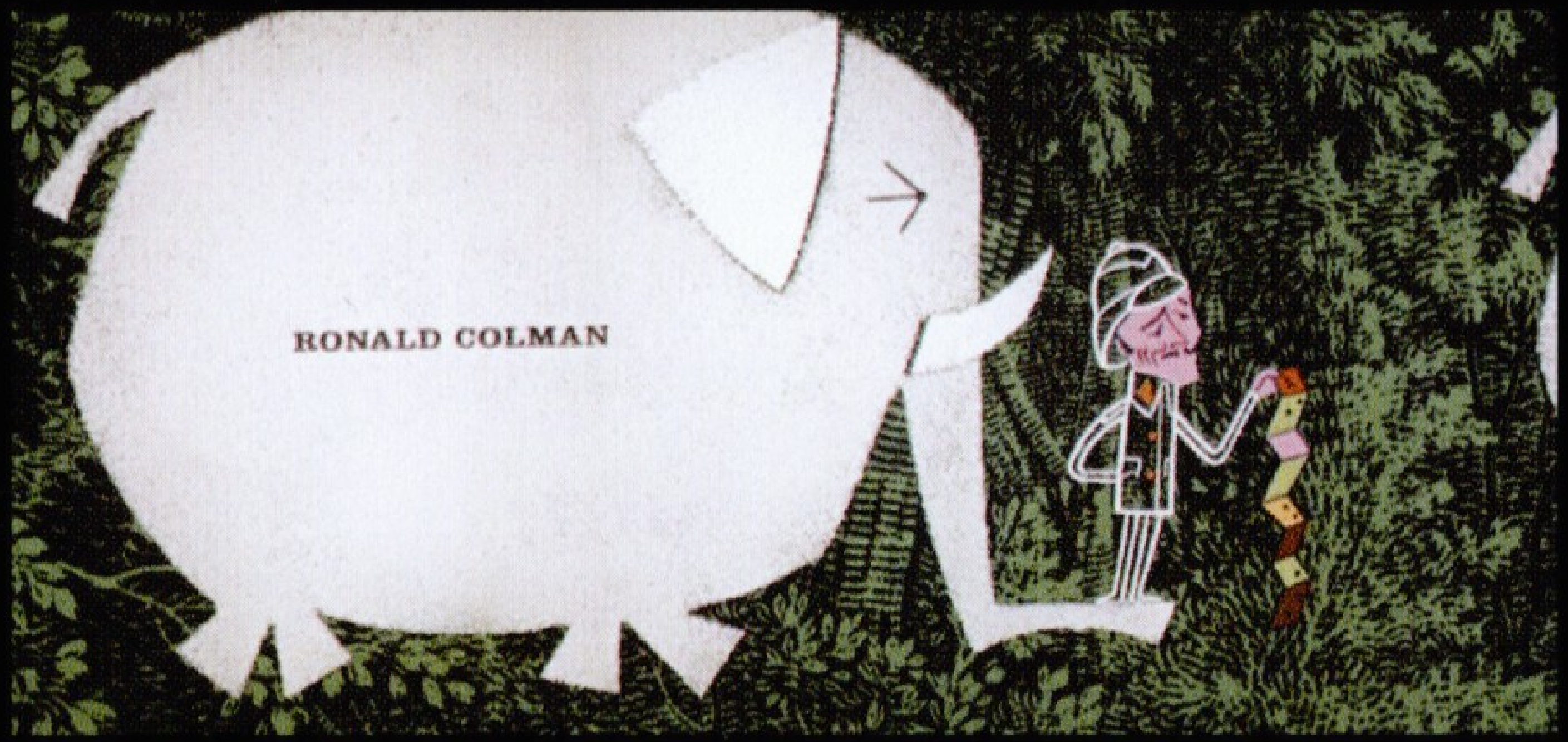


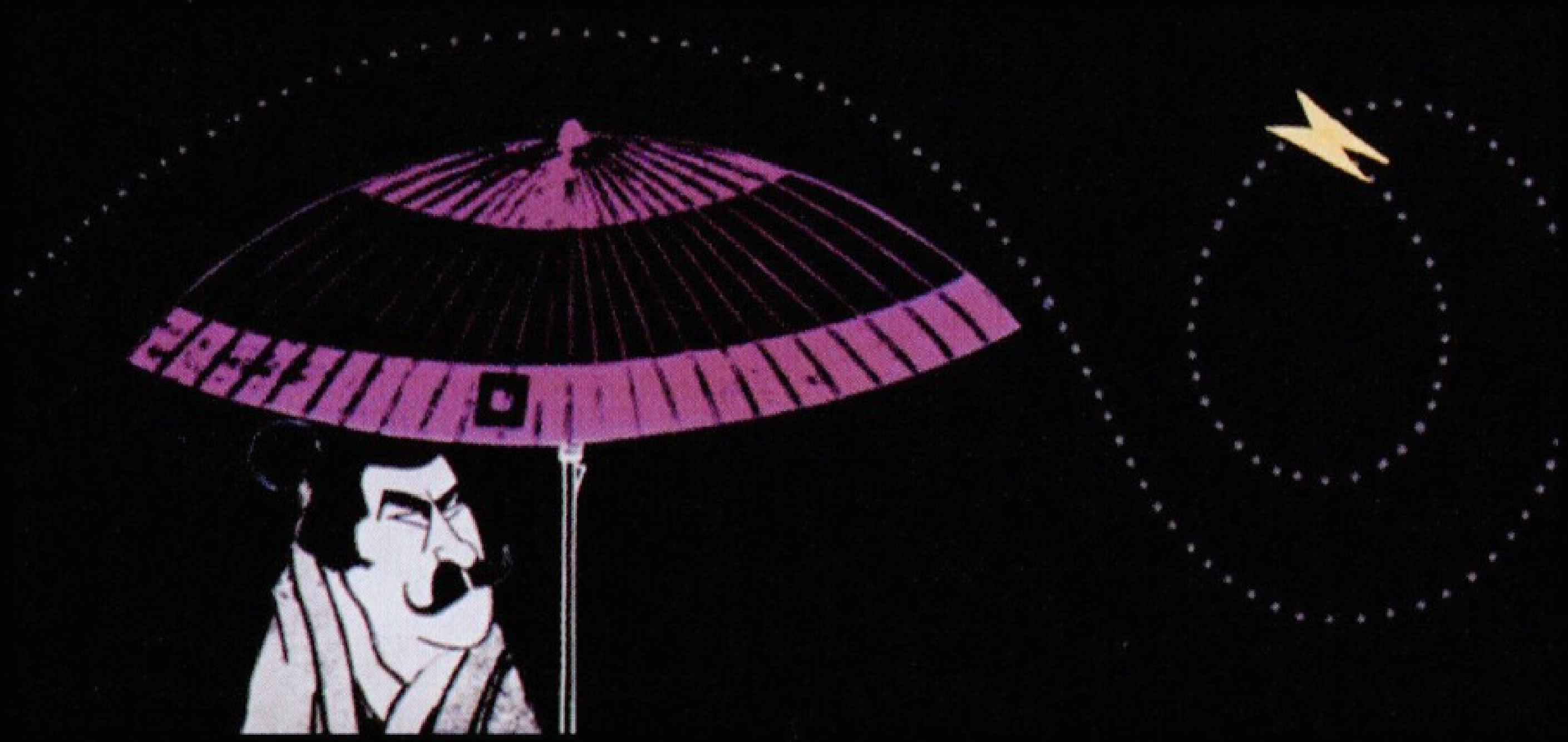


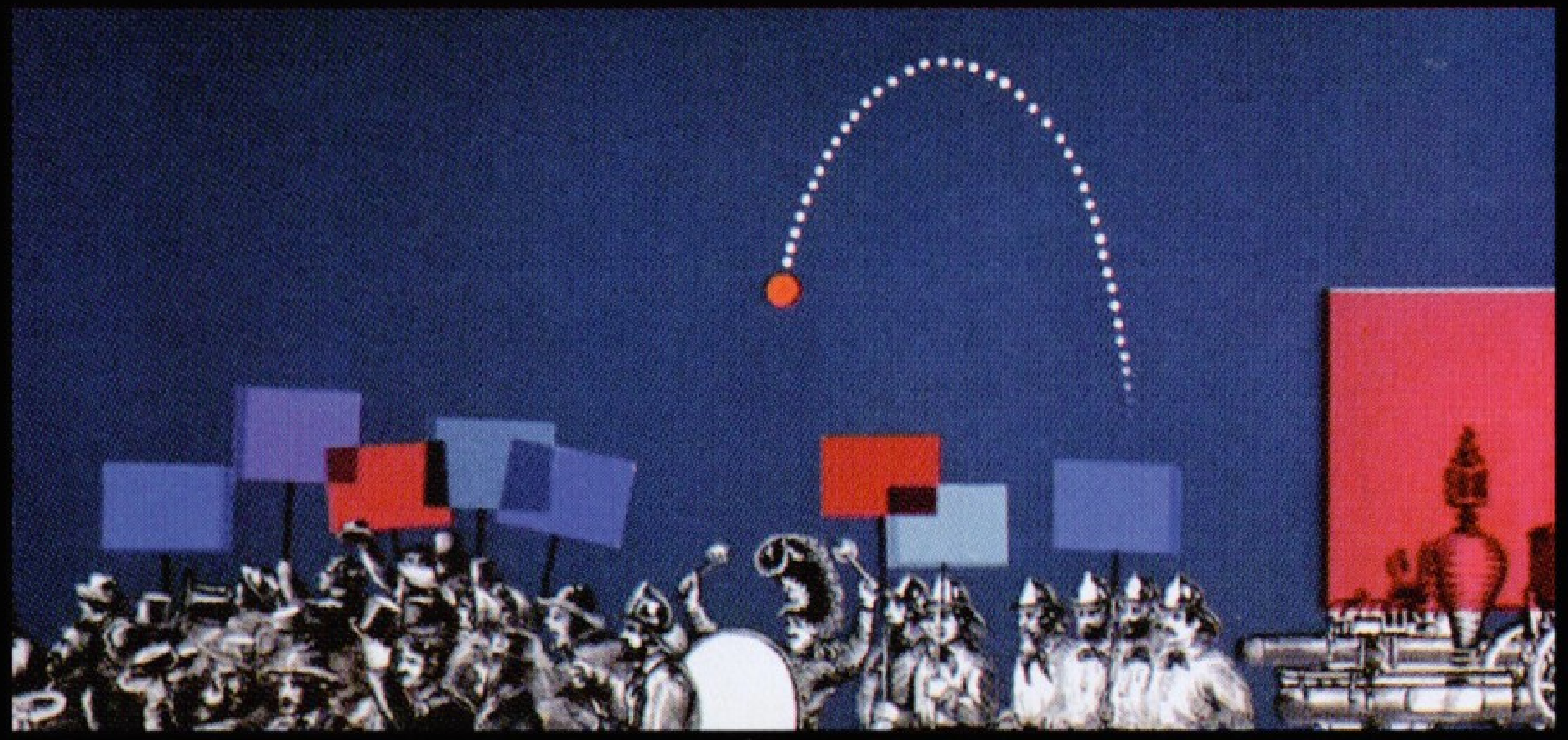


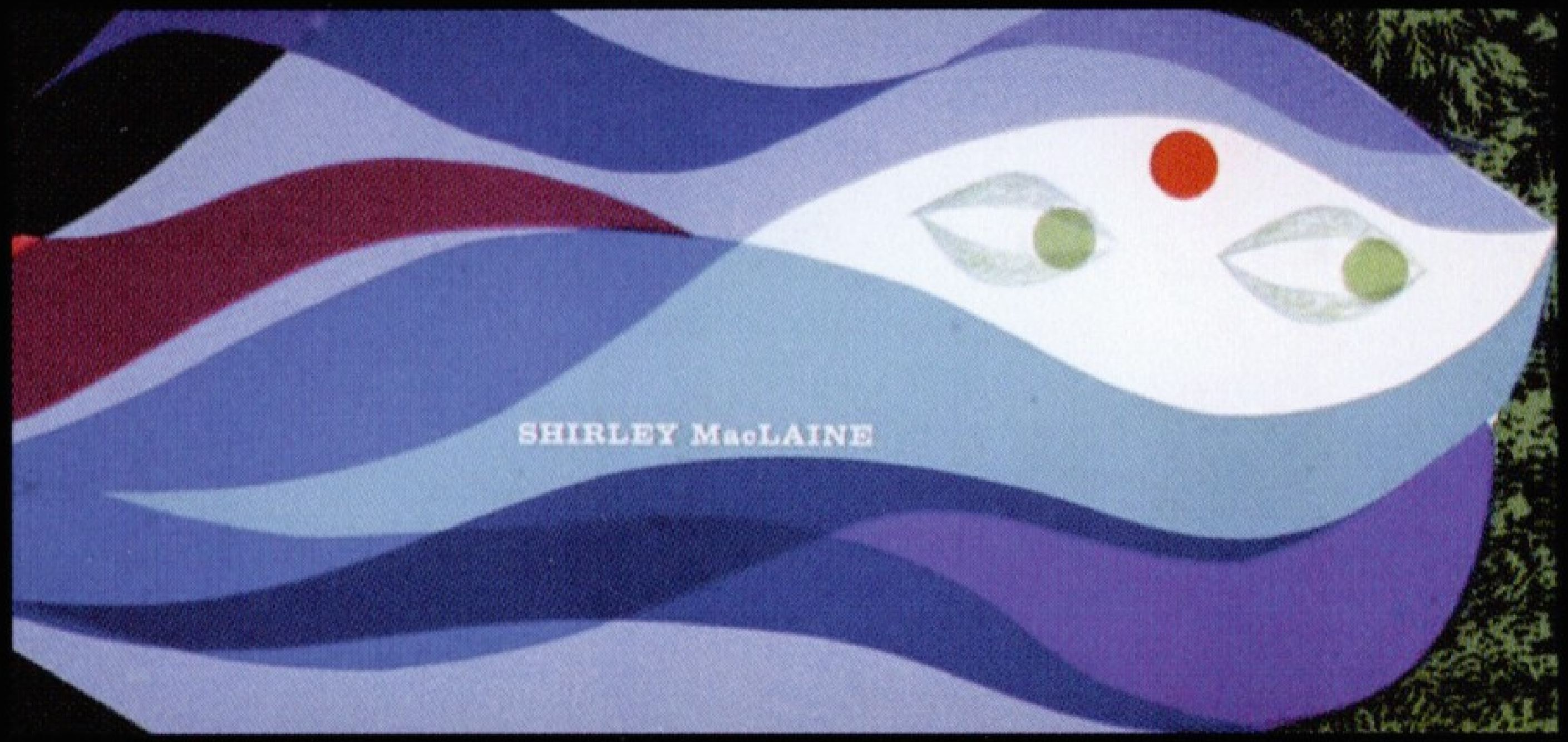

PETER LORRE

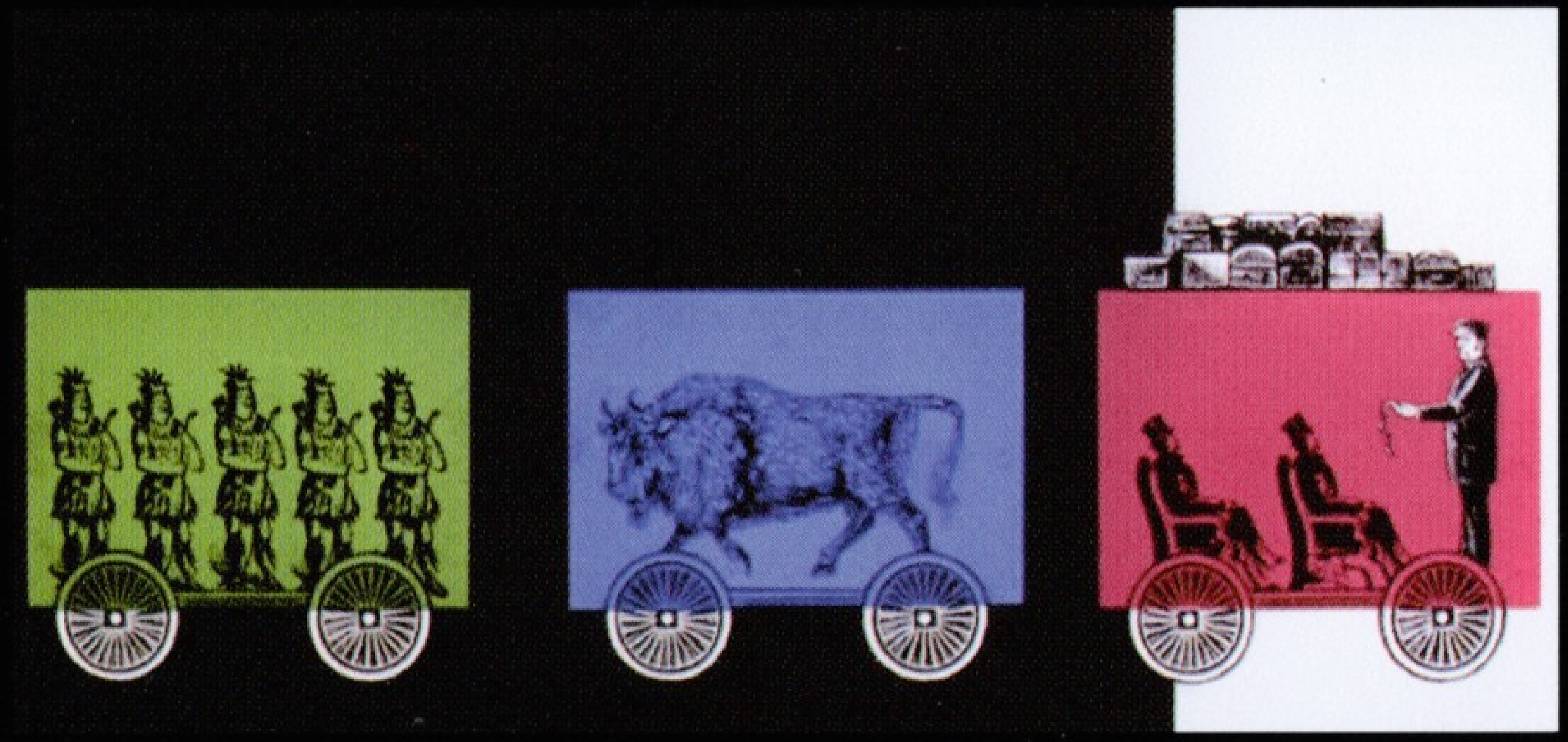


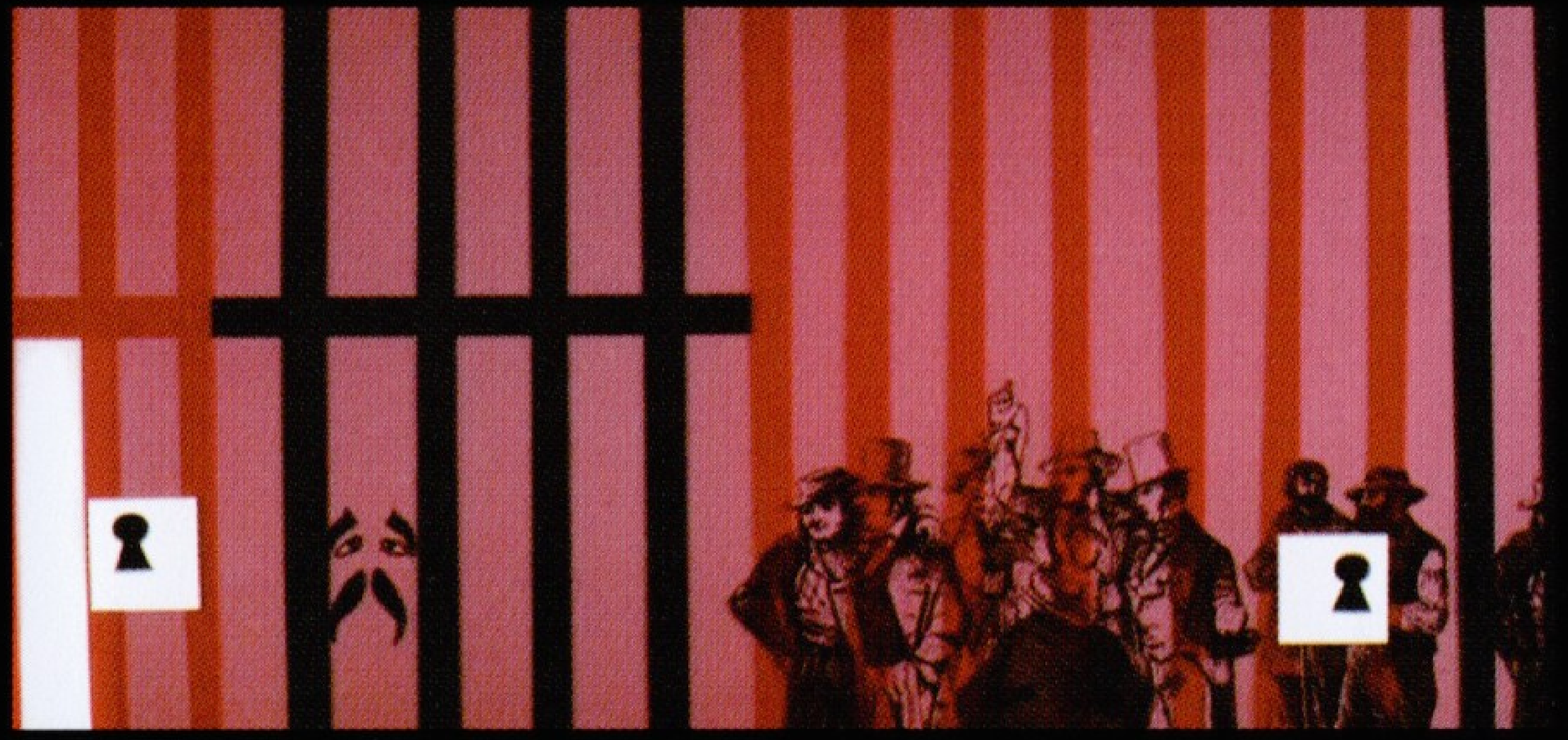

RONALD COLMAN






SHIRLEY MacLAINE





S

STORYBOARD

Herb Klynn: "I learned so much following John Hubley around—whom I creatively idolized. He drew so fluidly. I'd never experienced this before. He had another talent that was more significant—it was more than drawing the funny-looking cartoon characters; it was the ability to do a caricature which drew on the art of contemporary masters."

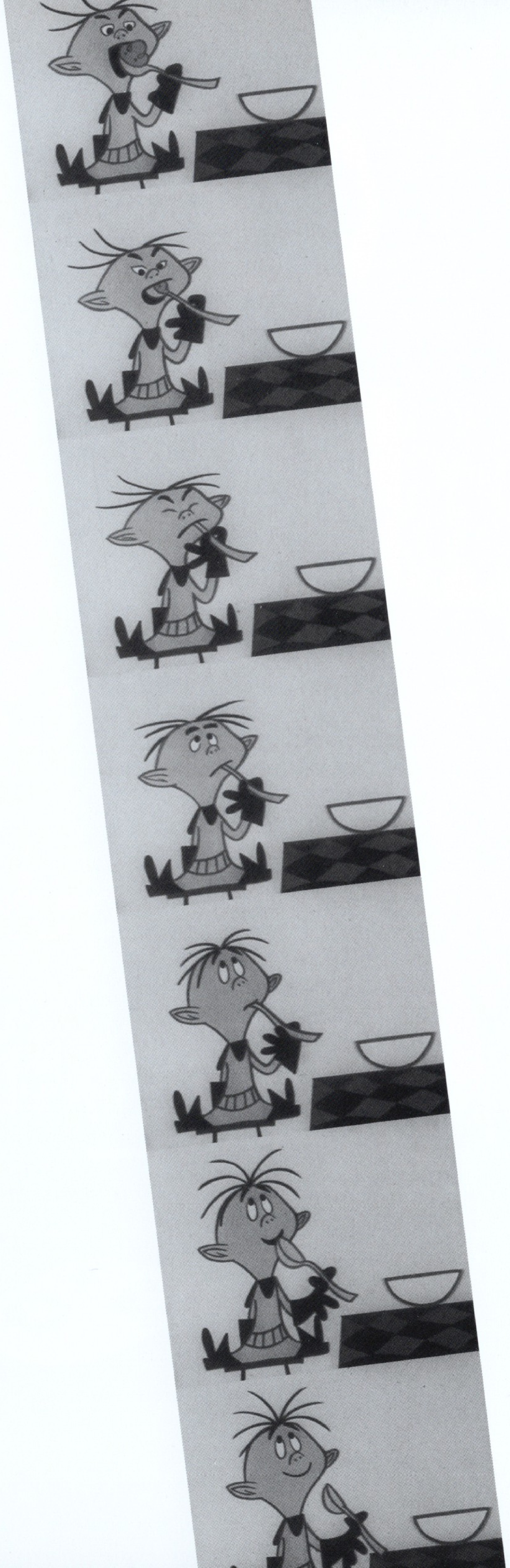
Bill Hurtz: "[Hubley's] drawing was a very strong influence on me, the way he would twist forms around—a brilliant draftsman."

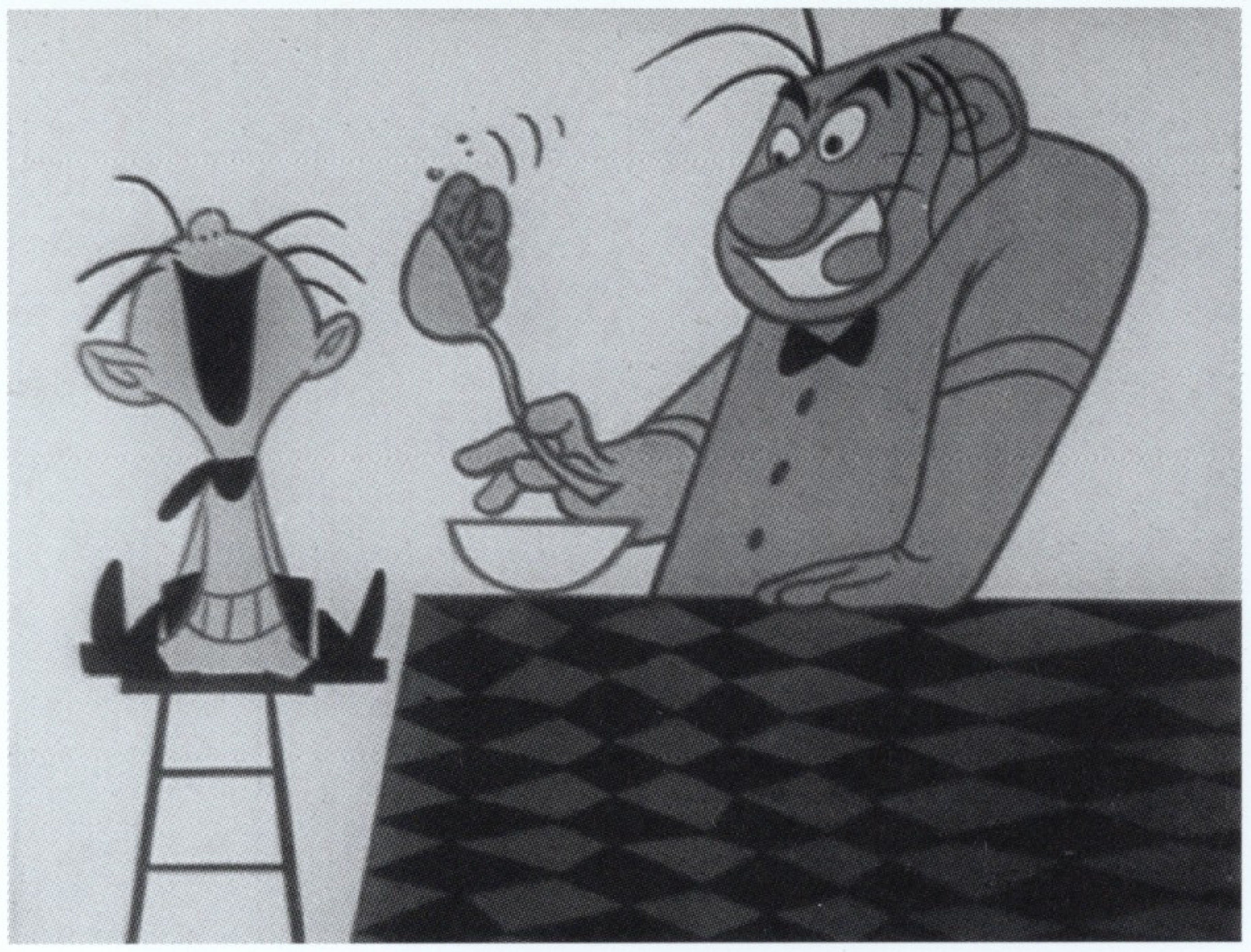
Gene Deitch: "From Hub, I learned new ways of looking at, and thinking about things—how to expand the vision that a camera provides. He had a supreme sense of character development and storytelling—always in fresh, new ways."

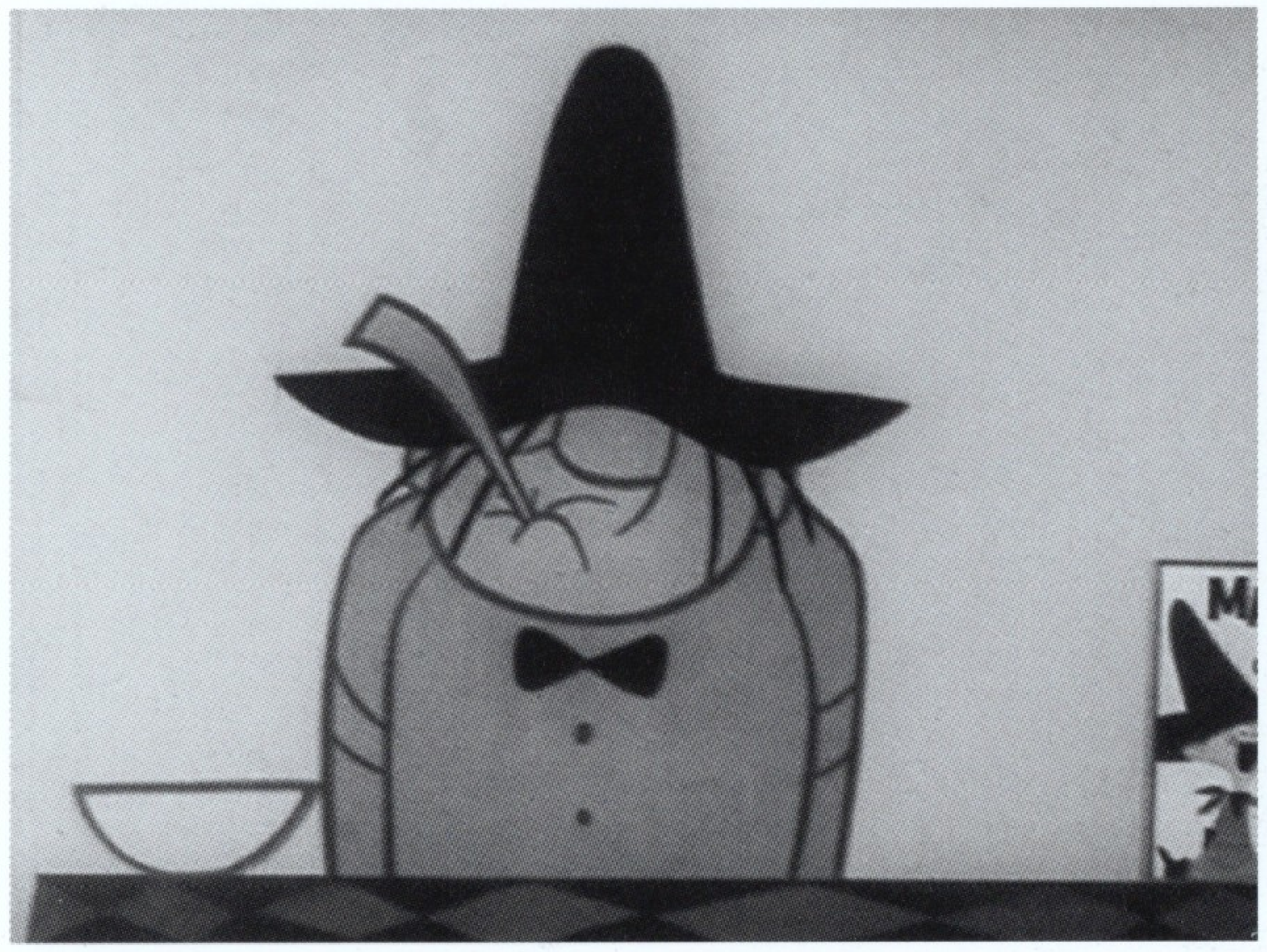
Earl Klein: "Of all the people I worked with in a span of thirty years in animation, John Hubley was probably the most talented of all. He was the most creative person I ever knew; as a matter of fact, I looked upon him almost as a genius."

Bill Melendez: "Hub could draw like nobody else—very expressive drawings that would capture the essence of almost everything, in a style that was completely the opposite of what was done at Disney and the rest of the industry. I always felt it was Hub that started us in the direction of caricaturing humans, rather than animals—which includes almost everything that's animated now."

It is rare for any animation artist to be so unanimously admired and praised by his peers, but Hubley was quite unlike most other artists. He was a seminal figure in the transformation of animation from what Hubley described as "humanized pigs and bunnies" into an art form that was capable of expressing sophisticated ideas in a contemporary graphic language. His career is notable in that it is in many ways a self-contained microcosm of the design movement itself: he was instrumental in the graphic breakaway from Disney beginning in the late 1930s, took part in some of the earliest design experiments in the early and mid-1940s, was the creative head of UPA during its peak period in the early 1950s, and produced groundbreaking television commercials in the mid-1950s and graphically trailblazing independent shorts at his own studio, Storyboard, in the late 1950s, which directly influenced European animators and helped usher in the flourishing foreign animation design scene of the early 1960s.







JOHN HUBLEY

Born in Marinette, Wisconsin, in 1914, John Hubley was exposed to art from an early age. His grandfather was a painter, and his mother had attended the Art Institute of Chicago. "I used to watch my grandfather when I was a little kid; so I had that kind of studio background," Hubley recalled. "It was always ordained that I would go to art school." Hubley attended a couple years of college in Los Angeles before he began to study painting at Art Center in 1934. Barely into his twenties, Hubley was already beginning to question the artistic status quo and formulate his own ideas about art. Bob McIntosh, who was Hubley's friend and classmate at Art Center, recalls:

> *He'd come into the classes that would start at 9 A.M. and then he seemed to disappear. I wondered where he was the rest of the day. He was across the street in the coffeeshop, just drinking coffee by the hour and smoking one [cigarette] after another, with some other guy that he considered maybe on his intellectual level. And they'd just sit practically all day smoking and drinking coffee, talking art, and who knows what else. Hubley always had very strong opinions and theories on art.*

Hubley was hired at Disney in 1936 as an assistant background painter on *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937). Rising quickly through the ranks, he was promoted to art director (the studio's term for "layout artist") on Disney's next feature, *Pinocchio* (1940). He continued in this role on *Fantasia* (1940), where he contributed to the beginning of the "Rites of Spring" section; *Dumbo* (1941); and *Bambi* (1942), in which his scenes are described by historian John Canemaker as displaying "an unusually free use of dry-brush technique and an Art Nouveau–ish form to the flames in the forest fire section." He left Disney during the infamous employees' strike of 1941, anxious to break away from the studio's creative shackles.

He ended up at Columbia's Screen Gems, and in 1942, he enlisted in the Air Force's First Motion Picture Unit (FMPU), which was dedicated to producing training and technical films for the war effort. While still serving in uniform, Hubley (along with Bill Hurtz) storyboarded *Hell-Bent for Election* (1944), the first major animated film produced by United Productions of America (UPA), then operating under the moniker Industrial Film and Poster Service. Hubley left the service in November 1945, at which time he joined UPA full time as a director-designer-writer. In 1946, following the departure of two of the studio's founders—Zach Schwartz and David Hilberman—he was promoted to studio vice president.

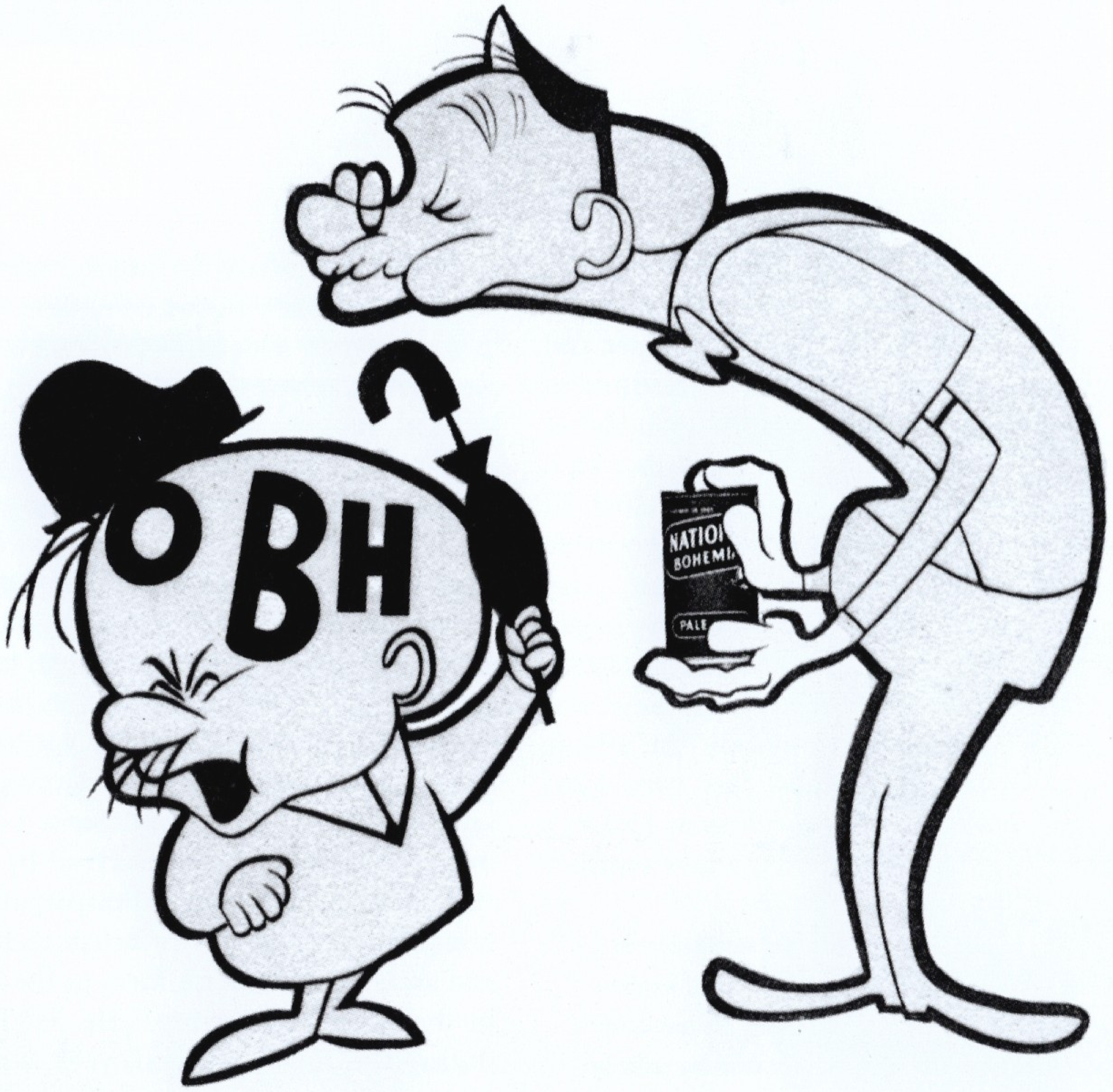
In May 1952, UPA president Stephen Bosustow, under pressure from the studio's distributor, Columbia, fired Hubley because of his fleeting Communist affiliations in the early 1940s. Historian Michael Barrier writes that Hubley's "party membership seems to have been no more than an incidental expression of an enthusiasm for radical change in general" rather than any sort of commitment to the Communist Party, but the Red-fearing hysteria of the time didn't allow for such distinctions. At the time he was dismissed, Hubley was just beginning to hit his stride at UPA with a trio of innovative projects: the theatrical short *Rooty Toot Toot* (1952), the series of animated inserts for the live-action feature *The Four Poster* (1952), and the CBS Radio sales film *More than Meets the Eye* (1952), which was conceived and boarded by Hubley and directed by Bill Hurtz. (Hubley's work at the studio is documented extensively in the "United Productions of America" section.)

Opposite and above: **Maypo Oat Cereal commercial**
Designer: John Hubley
Film stills

TV COMMERCIALS

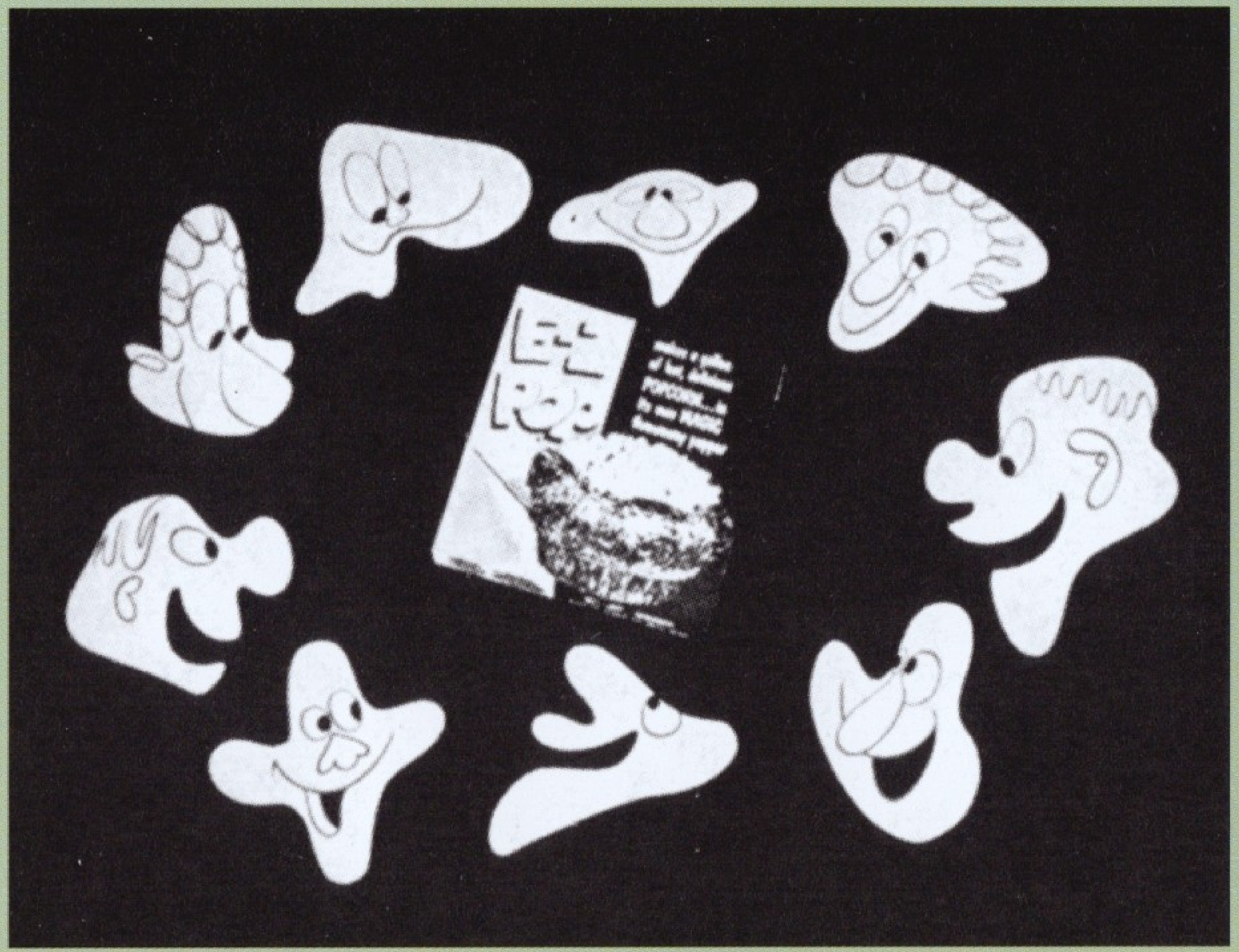
McCarthy-era politics could not curb John Hubley's irrepressible creative drive for long. Hubley opened his own studio, Storyboard, in 1953. Because of his precarious situation in Hollywood, he enlisted the help of layout artist Earl Klein, who acted as a front man for the studio when soliciting work from advertising agencies. The commercials produced during the studio's first three years of existence, between 1953 and 1955, represent perhaps the strongest body of TV commercial work produced by any studio during the decade. They transcend their mercantile origins and succeed remarkably as animated films, the best of which are on a par with theatrical cartoons in terms of sheer entertainment value. One memorable spot for Heinz Worcestershire sauce, featuring an announcer (voiced by Stan Freberg) who has a difficult time pronouncing the name of the product, has been recognized as one of the earliest TV commercials to employ humor at the expense of the advertiser. Freberg's "John & Marsha" routine provided the inspiration for another award-winning Storyboard spot for Snowdrift Oil Shortening. Quasi-abstract graphics and jazz soundtracks meld together in commercials like Speedway 79's "Dry Bones" and "Boogie Woogie" and E-Z Pop Popcorn's "Bop Corn," in which segmented popcorn characters are set to a recitative bebop soundtrack with drummer Ray McKinley providing the beat. Indicative of the strong relationship between jazz and design in Hubley's commercials, one of his ads—a Philip Morris spot designed by Charles McElmurry—even has a title card identifying the jazz musicians used in the spot: Shorty Rogers and His Giants with Shelly Manne.

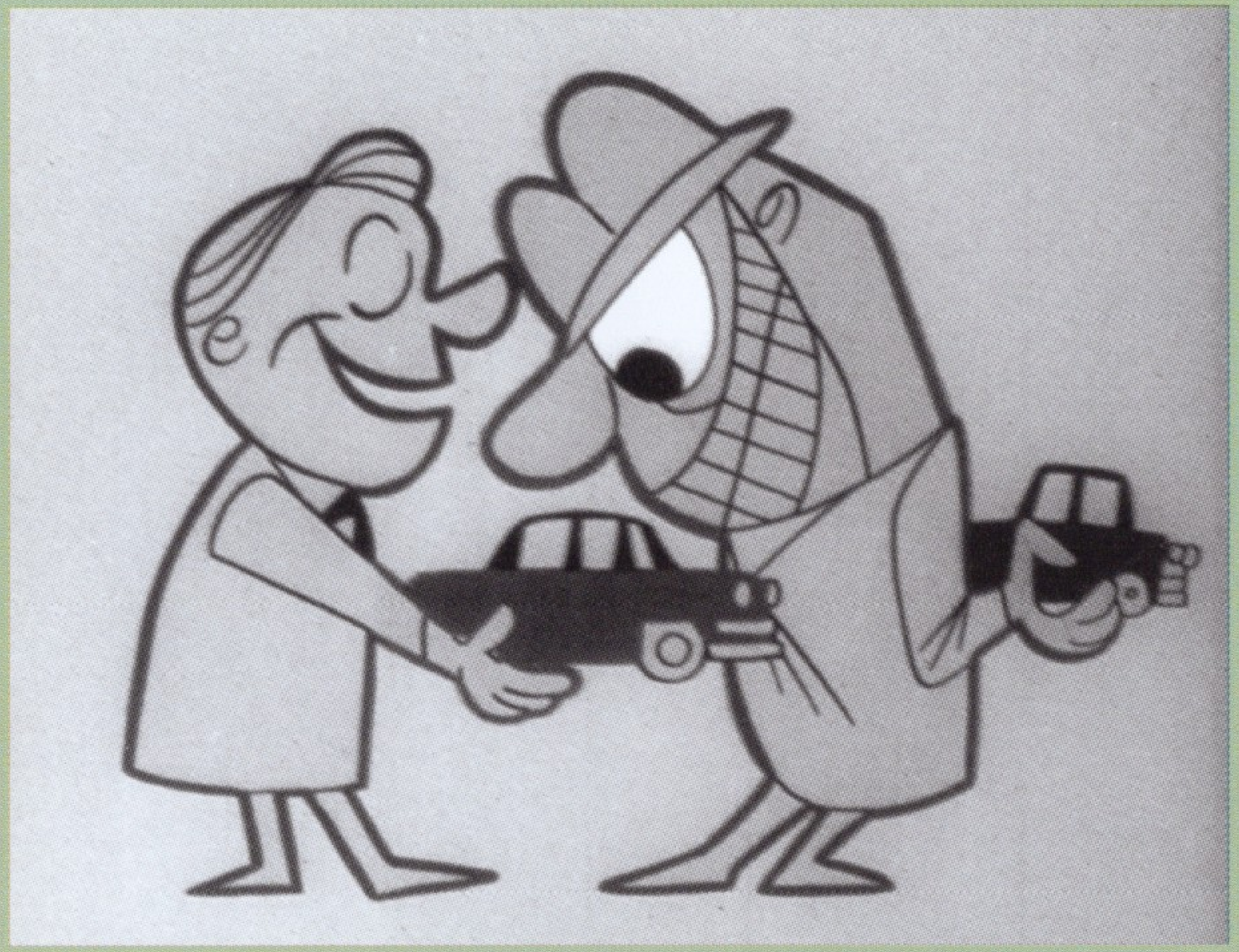
During this period, Hubley frequently collaborated with Bob Guidi, a well-known West Coast graphic designer and illustrator who designed dozens of memorable album covers for the Contemporary jazz record label. (Hubley was always looking for fresh points of view; while at UPA, he frequently hired live-action writers like Millard Kaufman, Sol Barzman, and Bill Roberts, who would bring a different perspective to the story process.) Guidi, who ran his own design studio, Tri-Arts (with business partner Harry Pack), was a prolific idea man and came up with the concepts and designs for a number of Storyboard's most celebrated spots, particularly for the Bank of America and Ford accounts.

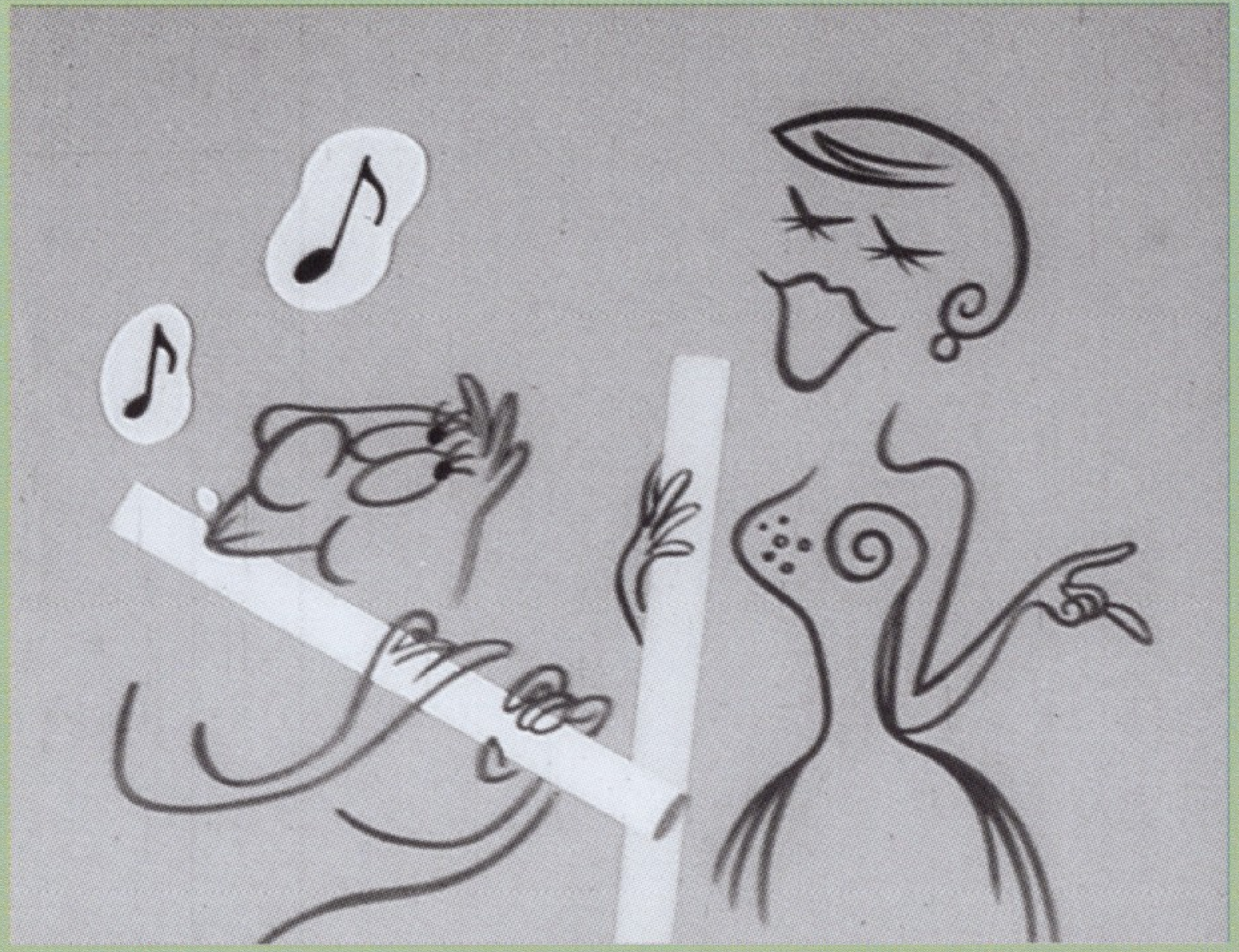


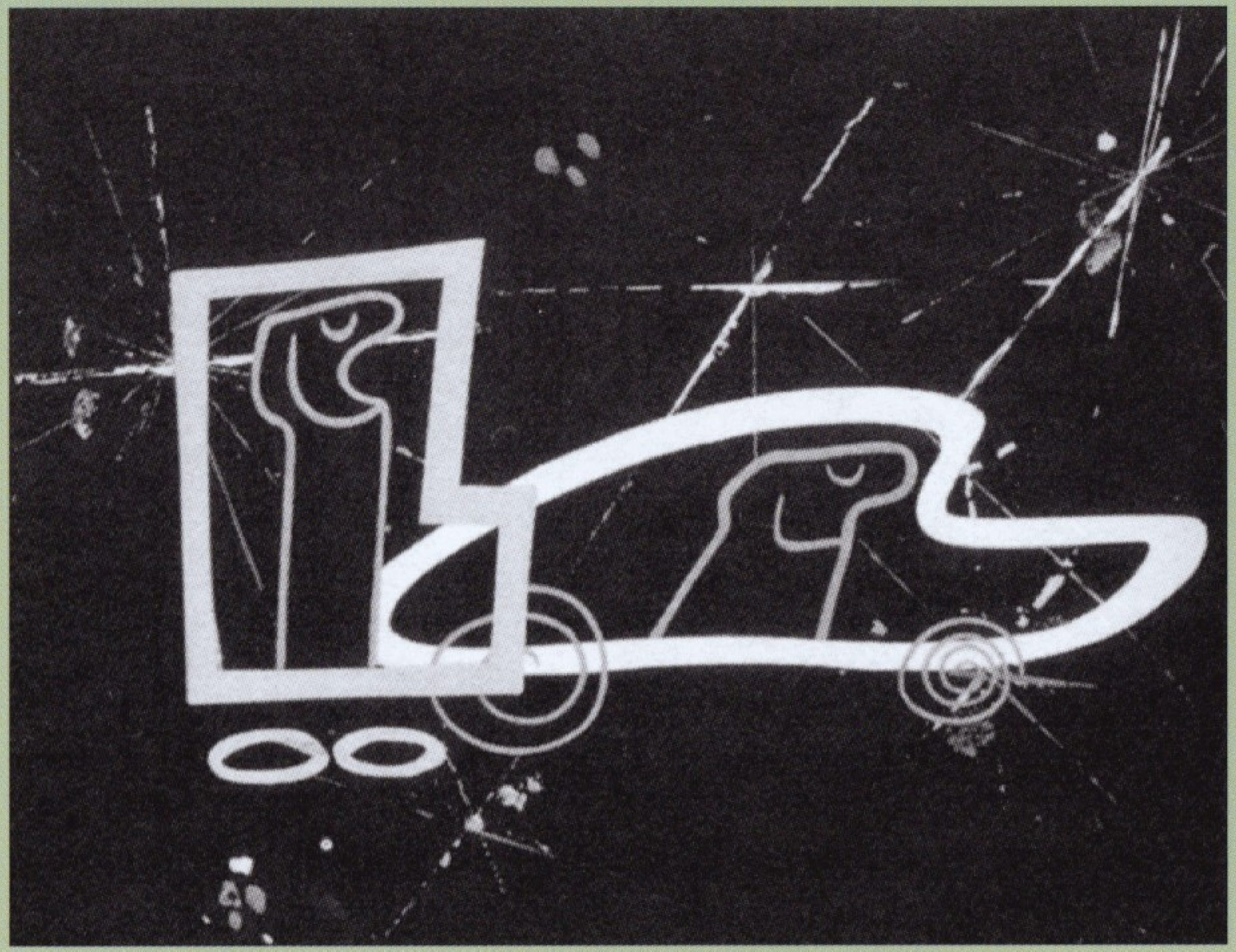
NATIONAL BOHEMIAN BEER COMMERCIAL
Designer: John Hubley

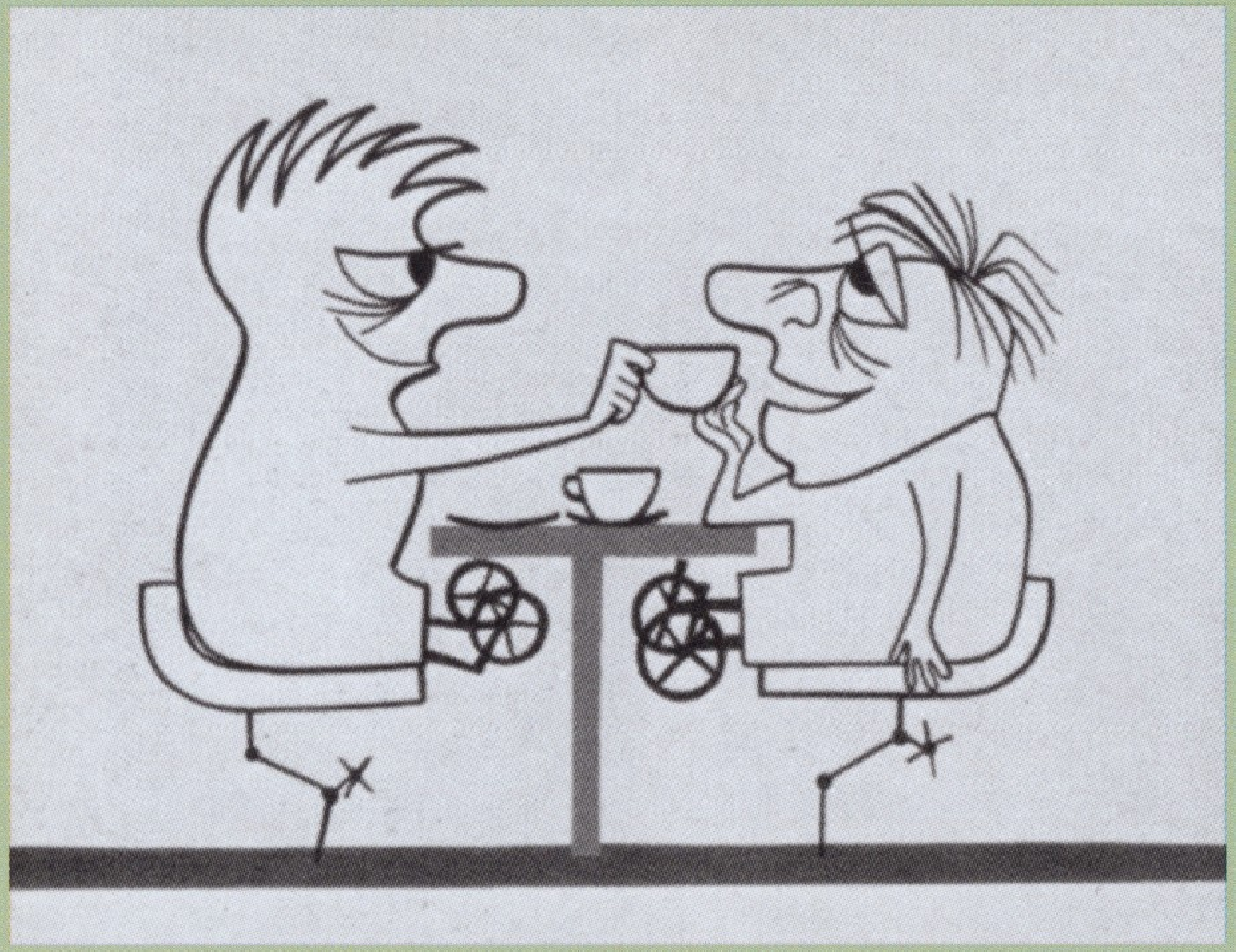
Opposite: Various commercials (from left to right): Top row: **E-Z POP POPCORN** (Designer: John Hubley), **FORD** (Designers: Bob Guidi and John Hubley), **PHILIP MORRIS CIGARETTES** (Designer: Charles McElmurry); Middle row: **AMOCO SUPER PERMALUBE** (Designer: John Hubley), **HILLS BROS. COFFEE** (Designer: Bob Guidi), **E-Z POP POPCORN** (Designer: John Hubley); Bottom row: **FORD** (Designers: Bob Guidi and John Hubley), **SPEEDWAY GASOLINE** (Designer: John Hubley), **CALSO WATER** (Designer unknown)

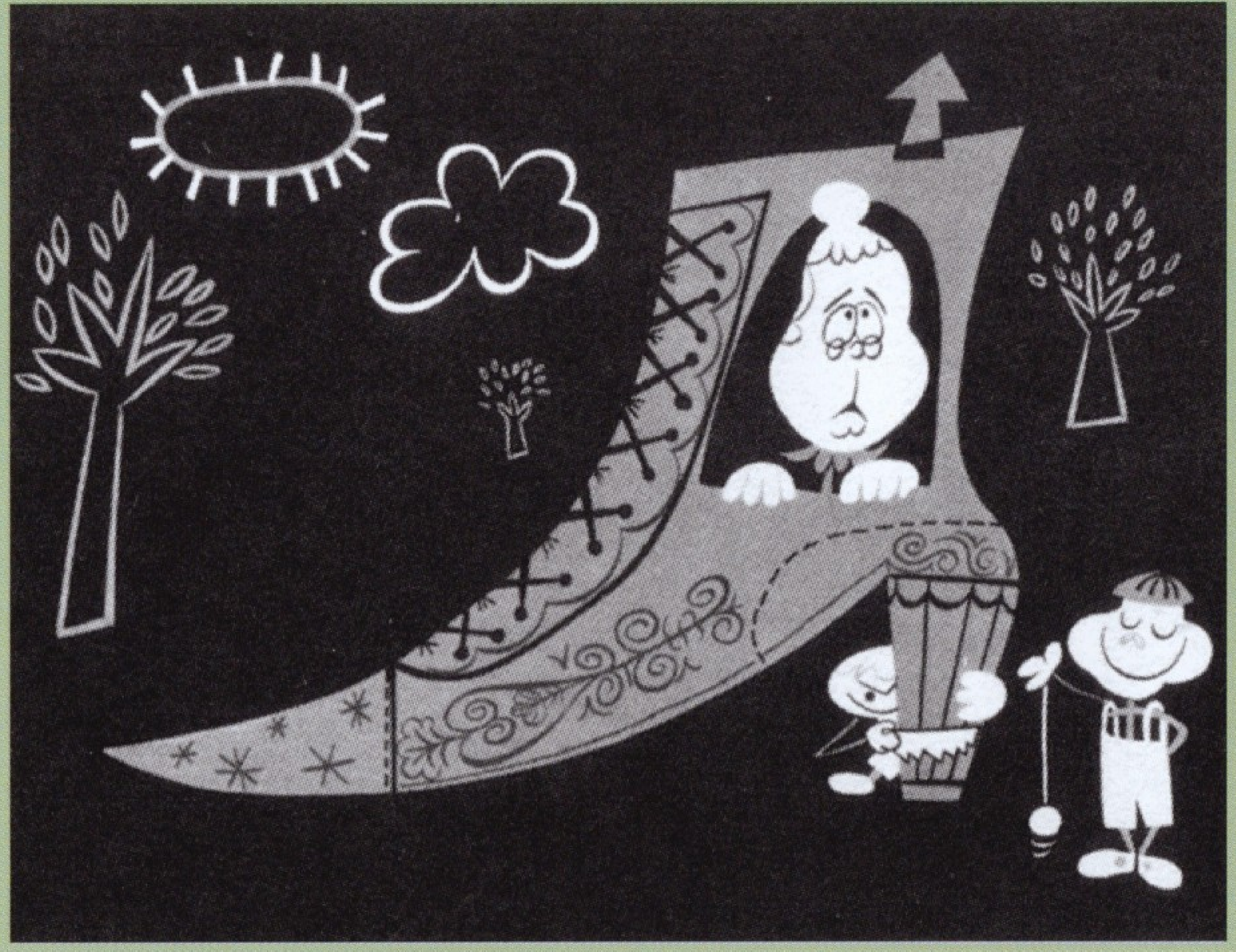

LET'S POP

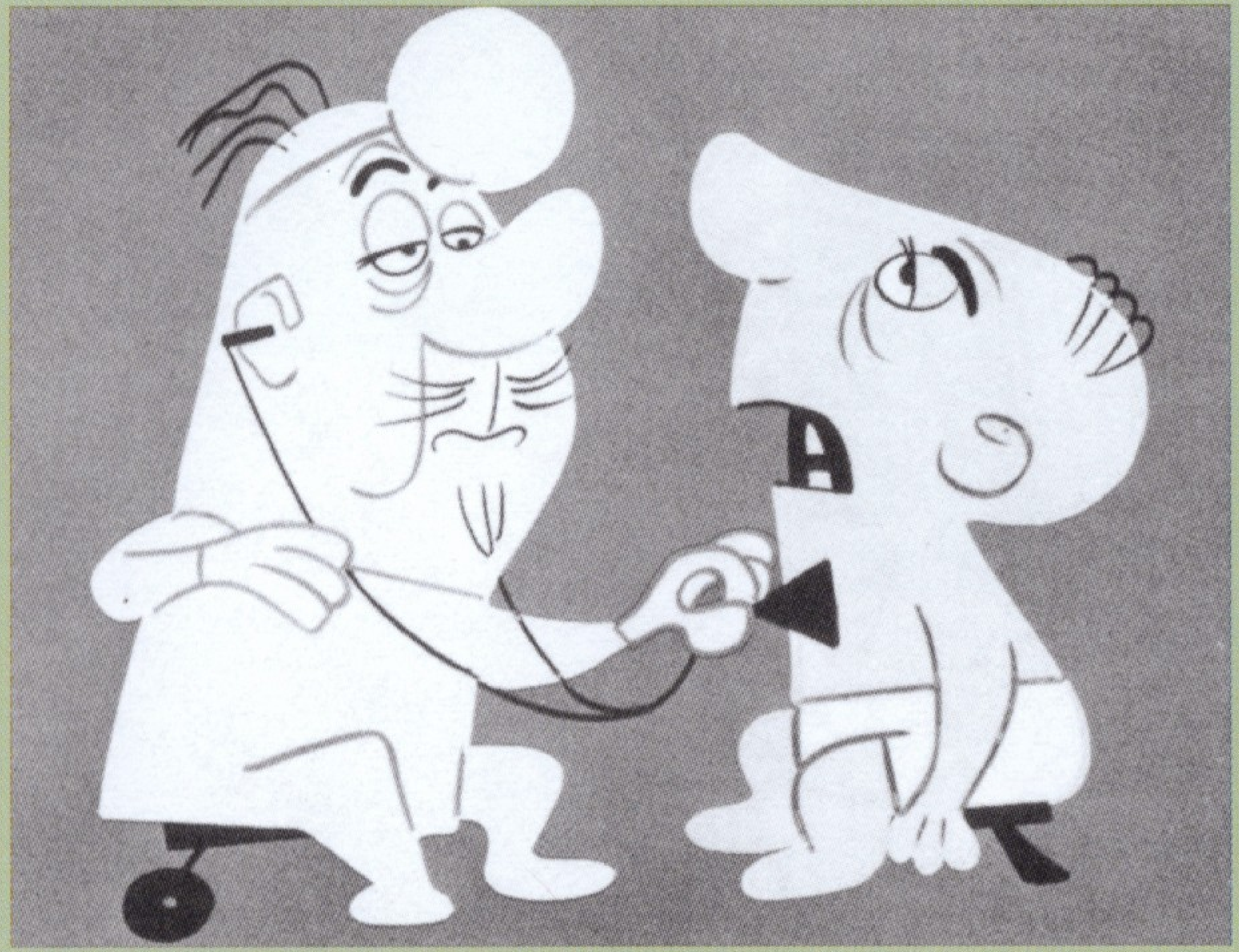








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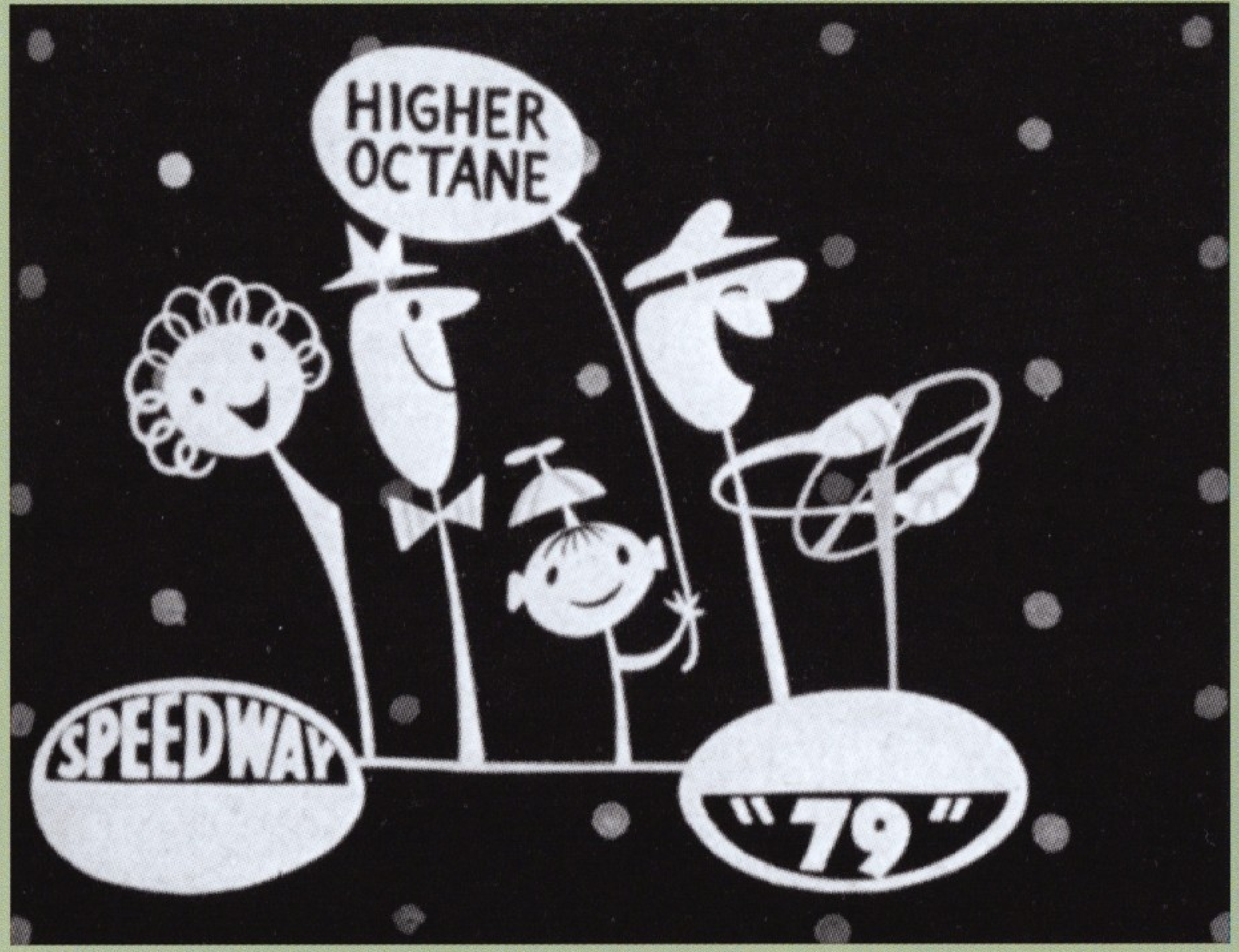
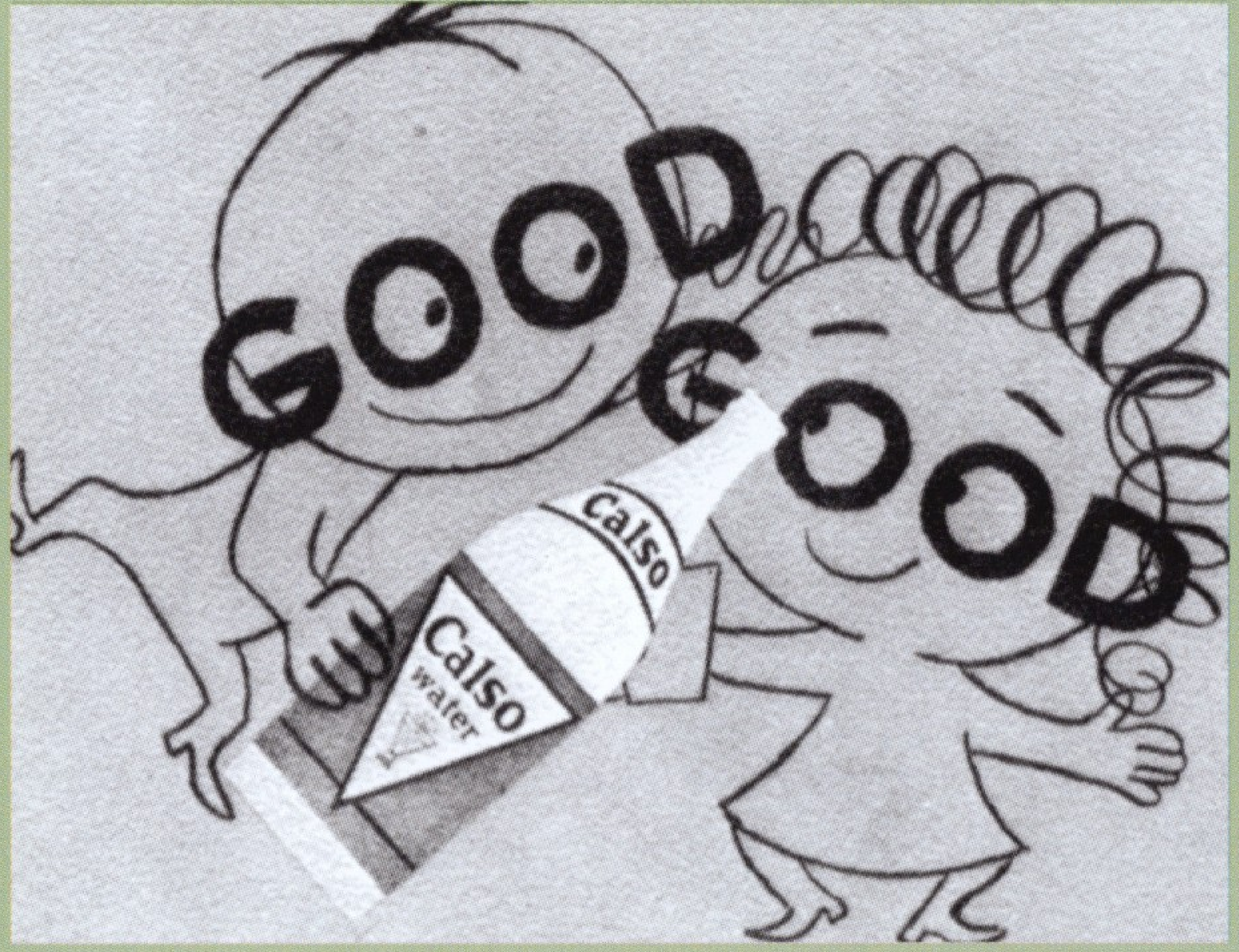

HIGHER OCTANE
SPEEDWAY
"79"


GOOD
GOOD
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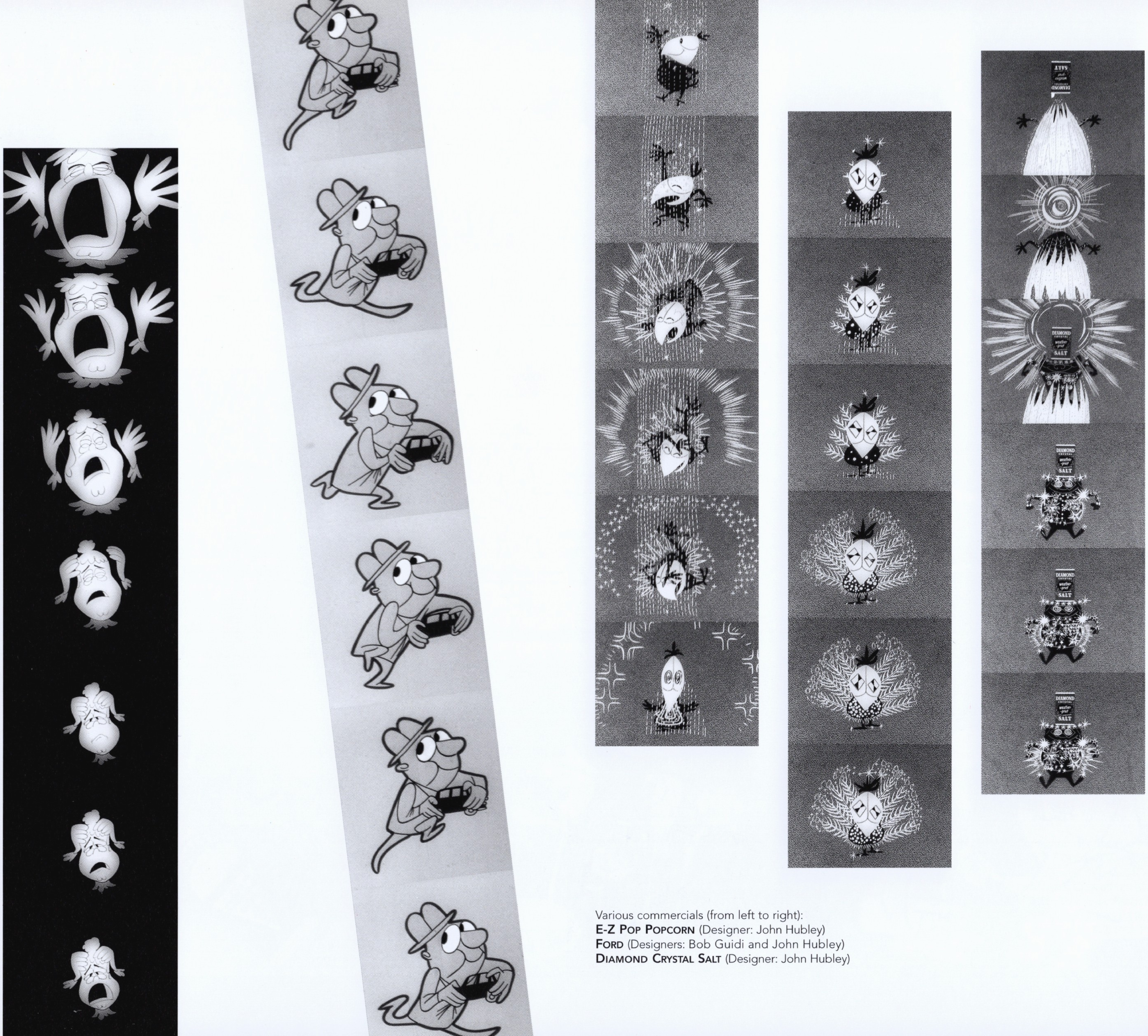
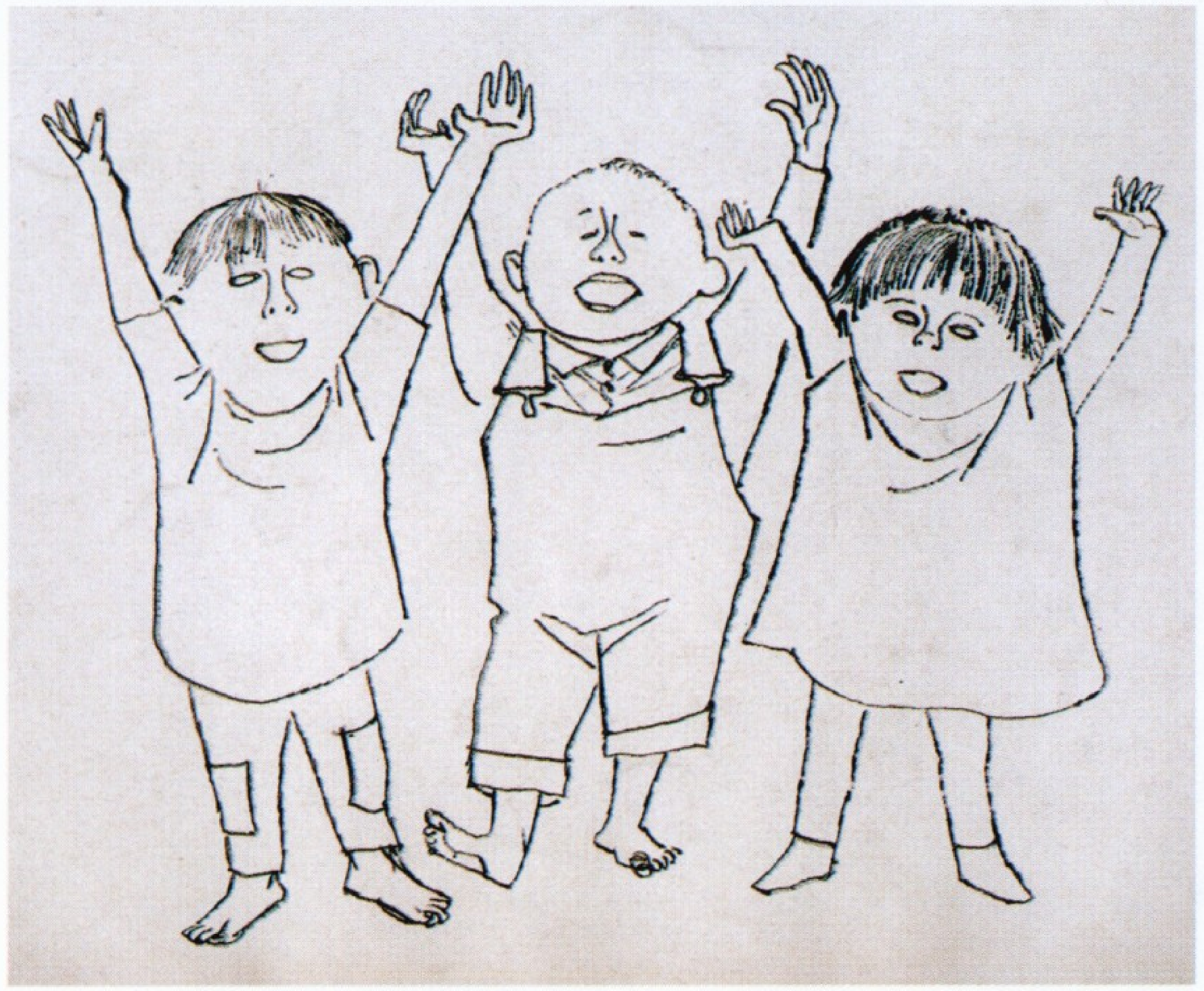
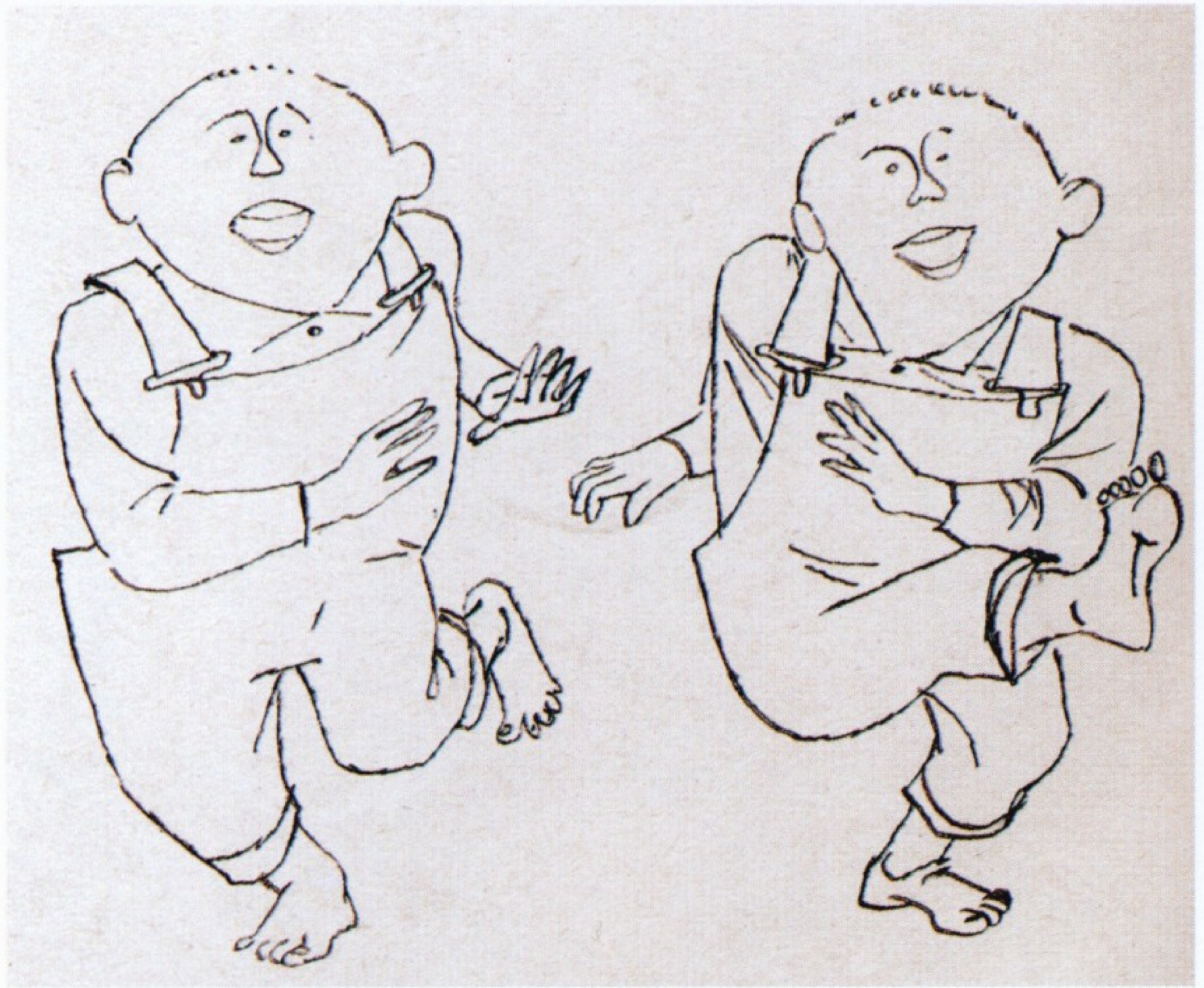
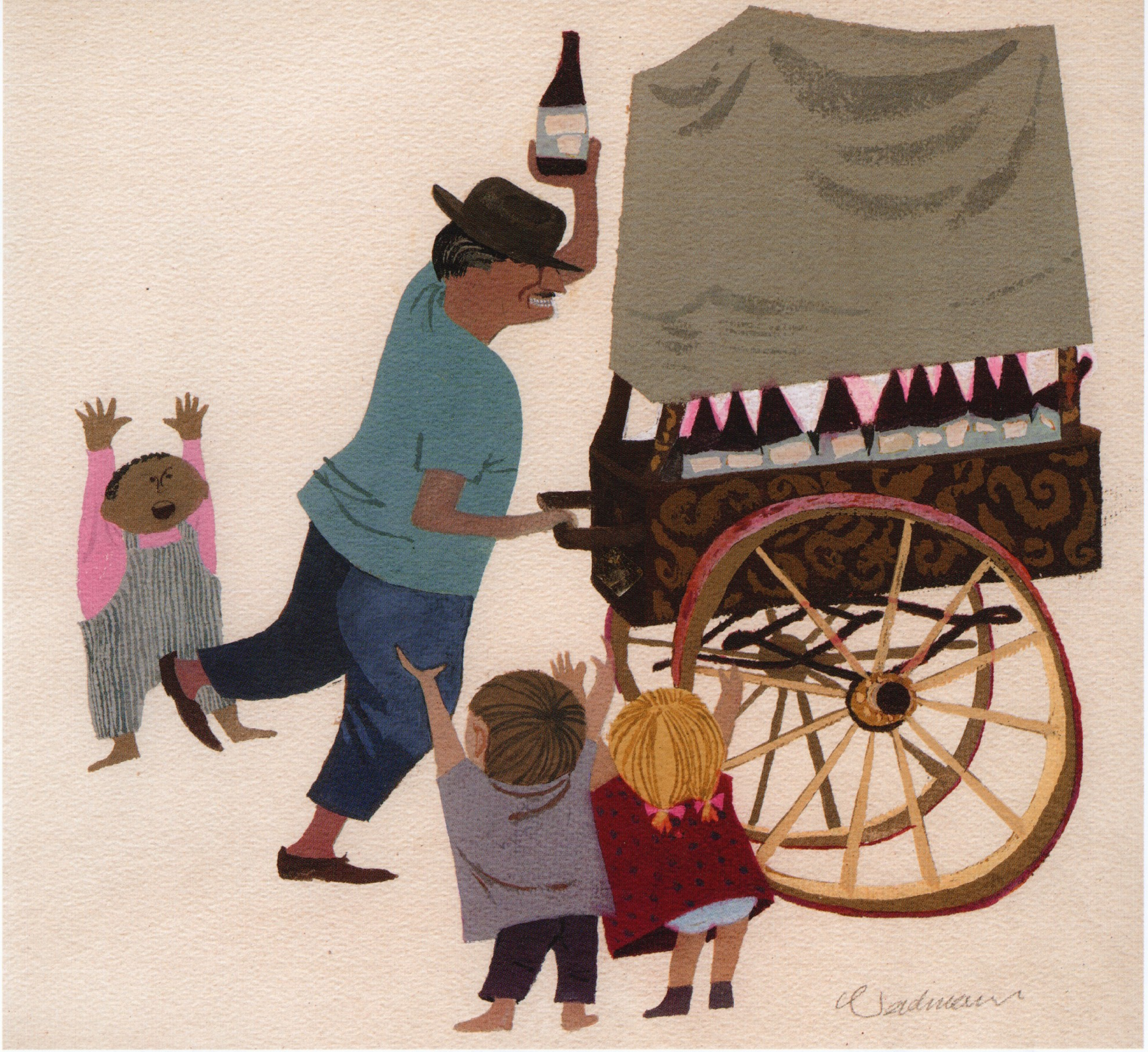
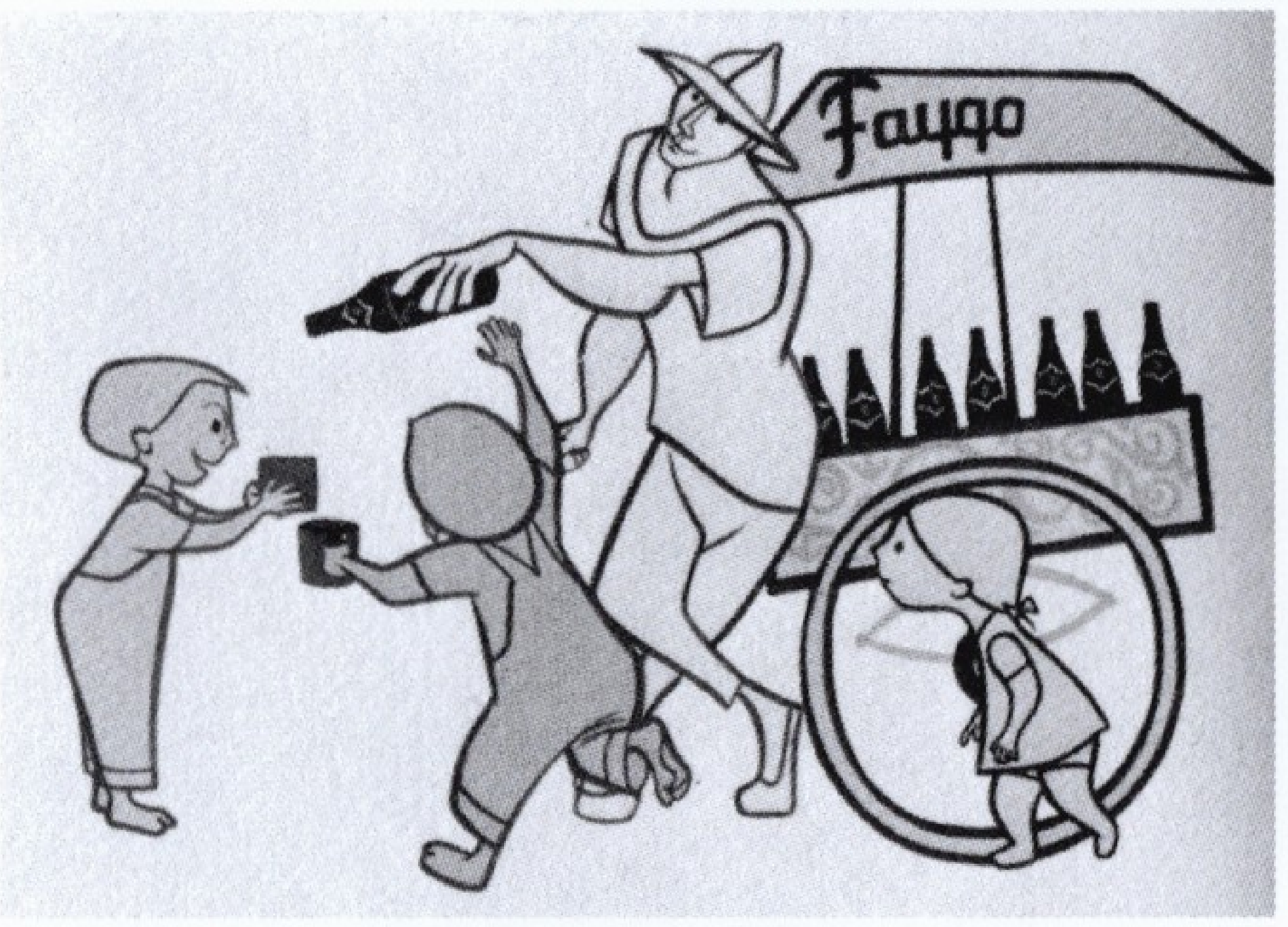

DIAMOND CRYSTAL SALT

Various commercials (from left to right):
E-Z Pop Popcorn (Designer: John Hubley)
Ford (Designers: Bob Guidi and John Hubley)
Diamond Crystal Salt (Designer: John Hubley)



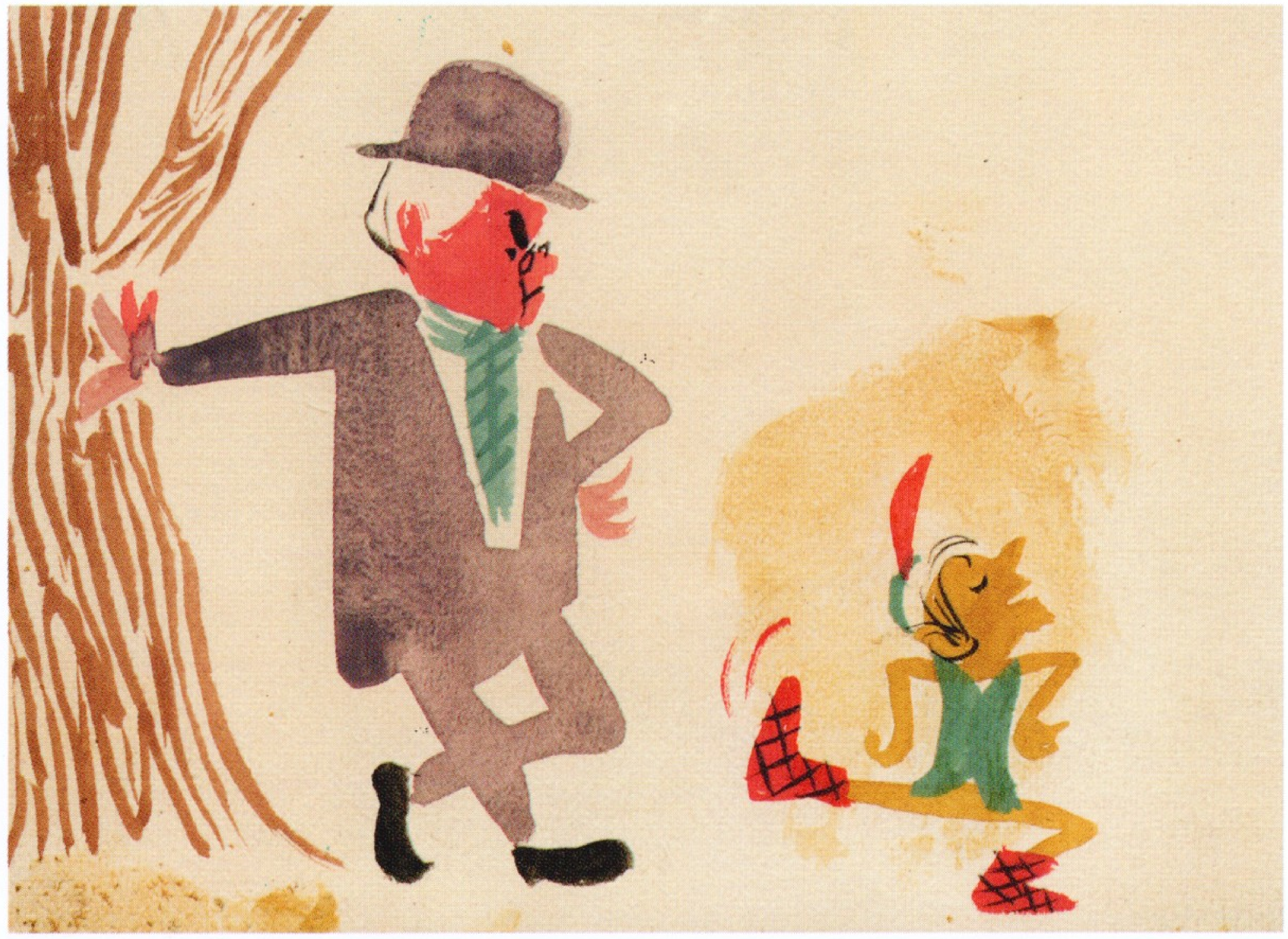


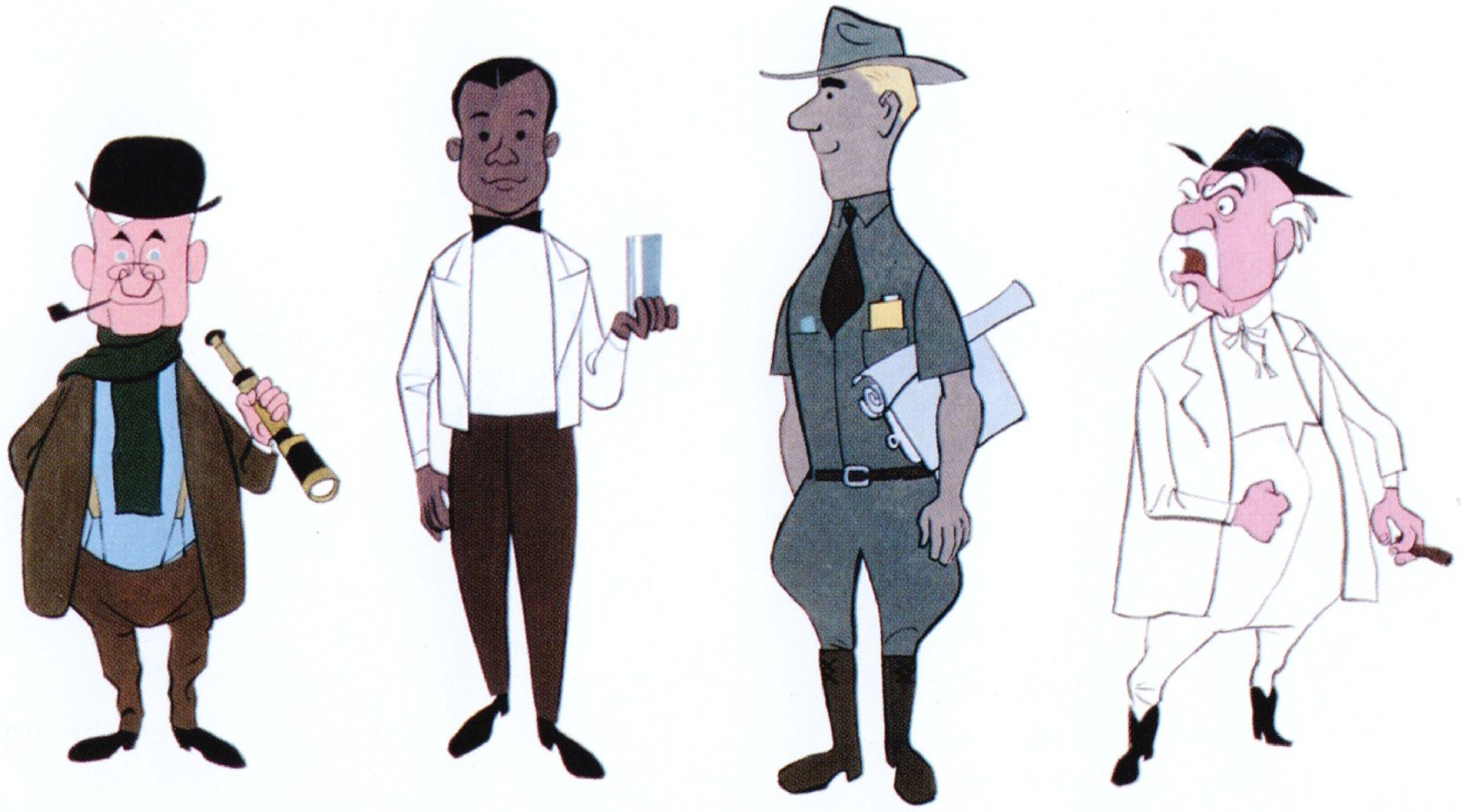




Faygo beverage commercial
Designer: David Weidman
Top left: Model sheet drawings
Top right: Concept painting
Left: Film still

One of Weidman's earliest assignments in the animation industry, his designs for this Faygo spot display a strong fine art sensibility.





Finian's Rainbow **(UNPRODUCED)**
Top left: Story sketch by John Hubley
Top right: Character model cels of some of the film's main characters
Above: Background concept art by David Weidman

Finian's Rainbow

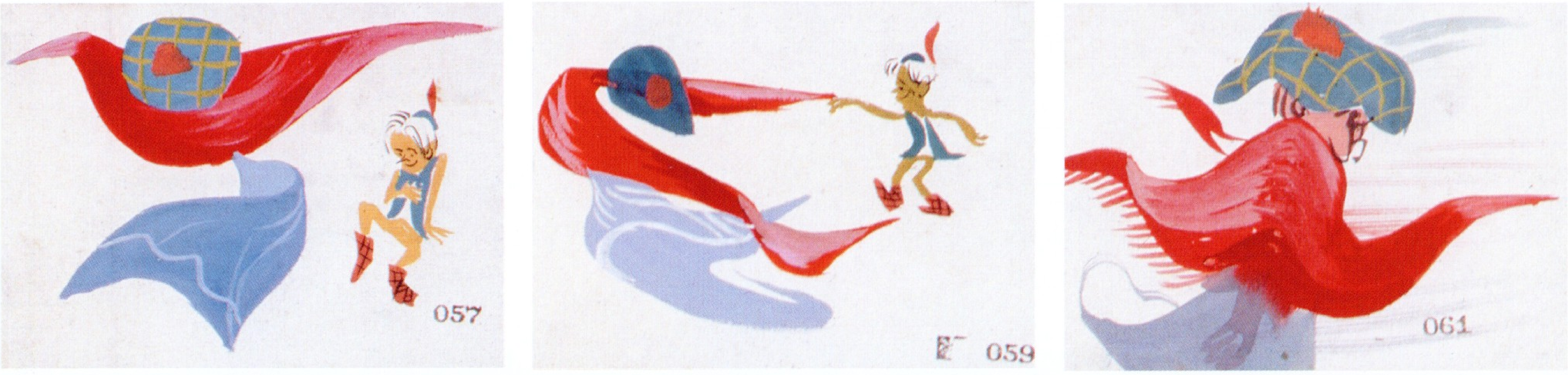
In addition to Storyboard's busy slate of television commercials, Hubley began planning the production of an animated feature in 1953—an adaptation of the Broadway musical *Finian's Rainbow.* With the backing of entrepreneur Michael Shore and financing from the Distributors Corporation of America (DCA), Hubley recorded the film's dialogue and song tracks in late 1954. The soundtrack boasted the talents of Frank Sinatra, Louis Armstrong, Ella Fitzgerald, Oscar Peterson, Barry Fitzgerald, Jim Backus, and two stars from the original Broadway cast, David Wayne and Ella Logan. Hubley had assembled an equally accomplished cadre of artistic talent for the film, including Paul Julian, Aurelius Battaglia, Gregorio Prestopino, and Leo Salkin. "We had more art directors on that film than I can count," Paul Julian remembered. "Everybody came on hired as an art director. . . . Hubley had put a knife in his teeth and started climbing the rigging. In order to sell the package to the kind of really upstairs talent he wanted, he promised everybody 50 percent of whatever there was. That is not much of an oversimplification."

Another artist who worked on the film was David Weidman (b. 1921), a prodigious draftsman who had studied for three years under Rico Lebrun at Jepson Art Institute. Hired straight out of school and with no prior animation training, Weidman's style reflected his intense training under Lebrun, particularly in his use of dynamic caricatured anatomy, which also showed the influence of Ben Shahn and David Stone Martin. Weidman recalls that he was put in a room with Hubley's friend, the illustrator Gregorio Prestopino, and "all we were supposed to do was to make drawings and develop characters." Hubley's approach to filmmaking was fluid and far removed from the rigid, compartmentalized Disney filmmaking process; he would allow the work by designers like Weidman and Prestopino to inspire the storytelling. For example, in one particular model sheet, Weidman had drawn a little child wearing a puffed-up cap. Upon examining the drawing, Hubley decided that the reason for the puffy cap was because the kid kept a frog underneath his hat, and he said that the character would have a frog peeking out from under his hat throughout the entire film.

Though Hubley was not an animator himself, he was very sensitive to the movement of characters. He wanted to explore the creative potential of movement in animation and to have his characters move in a manner that was as distinctively styled as their designs. The goal was to find a more honest emotional expression than could be found in the literal "illusion of life" movement of Disney feature animation, in which all the emotions were displayed on the surface. "Why can't these be human caricatures and get the same vitality in animation characters that still drawings have?" Hubley pondered. Like his earlier UPA short *Rooty Toot Toot*, *Finian's Rainbow* was to have included dance and ballet sequences, including a section where one of the film's main characters performs a "ballet-like dance with anthropomorphic wash from the clothesline." Another of the songs in the film was planned by Hubley as an "abstract sequence and Boy and Girl symbols dancing with the moon." Weidman remembers going with his wife, Dorothy, to a dance studio in Hollywood one evening where Hubley had arranged for an instructor to conduct exercises with the animation artists so that they might be inspired to think differently about human movement. Earl Klein also remembered these lessons:

> *[Hubley] would play . . . a particular type of music and have the animators go like a [conga] line, around and around the room, listening to the music and trying to feel the rhythm and act out the motions. . . . [He] said he wanted to break them away from the old established routine, the rubbery action movements that were so prevalent in those days . . . to influence them to be more creative in how they would see the human body in terms of animation.*

Production on *Finian's Rainbow* was abruptly halted in February 1955. Word of the project had reached the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE), which demanded that Hubley appear before the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) and testify. Hubley steadfastly refused to cooperate with the committee, on grounds that he would be asked to name names. This prompted the backers to withdraw financial support of the film. Fred Schwartz, head of the financing company DCA, laments, "The blacklist was that powerful. This is an example of what happens when you squelch talent. Which is directly against everything we stand for, such as freedom of speech. This could have been a classic that would live forever."



Finian's Rainbow (unproduced)
Story sketches by John Hubley

SWITCHING COASTS

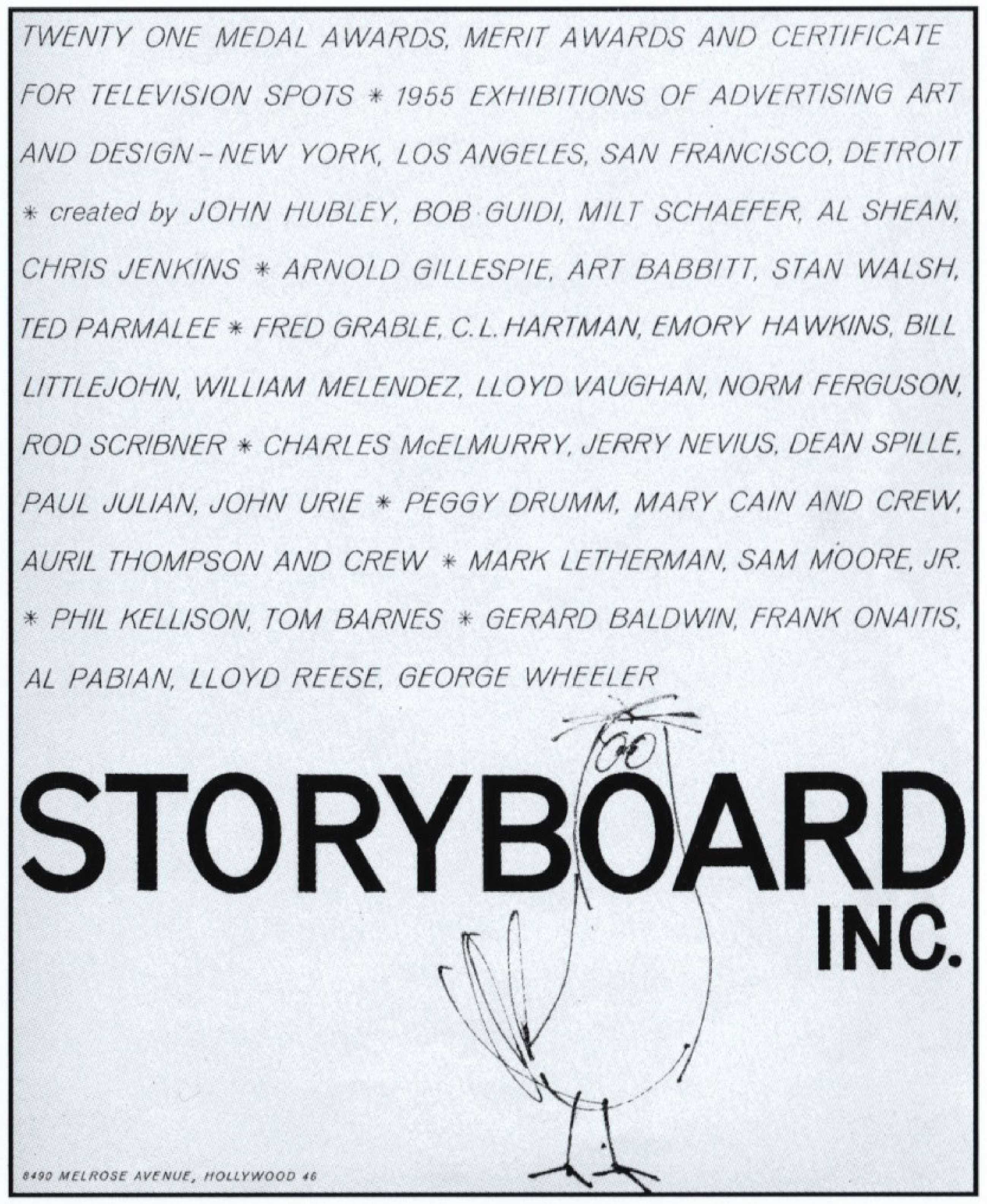
Following the collapse of *Finian's Rainbow*, in 1955, Hubley married, for the second time, to Faith Elliott (1924–2001), an artist and film editor whom he had met during World War II. Unlike his first wife, Claudia, Faith was a creative partner who held her own strong views about art. John collaborated closely with her on the rest of the films that he produced. Together, they decided to relocate Storyboard to New York. Hubley wrote about his decision to close his Los Angeles studio in a letter to clients:

> *As president of a larger organization, I found myself involved in endless administrative details. By curtailing the quantity of production and reducing the size of the organization, I will be enabled to function as a creative artist and to become directly involved in the concept, design and direction of films. Further I will be able to engage in the preparation and direction of theatrical and industrial projects.*

When the Hubleys moved to New York, the Storyboard artists in Los Angeles regrouped to form Quartet Films. The "quartet" was comprosed of Storyboard's three main directors—Stan Walsh, Art Babbitt, and Arnold Gillespie—and the studio's production manager, Les Goldman. The commercials that Quartet produced are by essentially the same crew that had produced the Storyboard spots. They are handsome enough, but they also make abundantly clear that the driving creative vision behind the Storyboard commercials belonged to Hubley and nobody else.

The wedding vows of John and Faith Hubley included a commitment "to make one noncommercial film a year." This was largely because of Faith's convictions about the dangers of working in commercial animation. "I have much stronger feelings than John about the risks of spending one's life in advertising," she once commented in an interview. "We made a compromise when we moved to New York: we would try to make one serious film a year and do whatever else we had to do to support that film." One of their earliest projects was a live-action short that Faith had written, *A Date with Dizzy*, directed by John Hubley in 1956, which featured Dizzy Gillespie and his Quintet attempting in vain to create a commercial jingle for an imaginary product called "Instant Rope Ladder." The film was a stinging satire of the advertising business and illustrated how easily art could be compromised and usurped by the demands of a commercial enterprise.

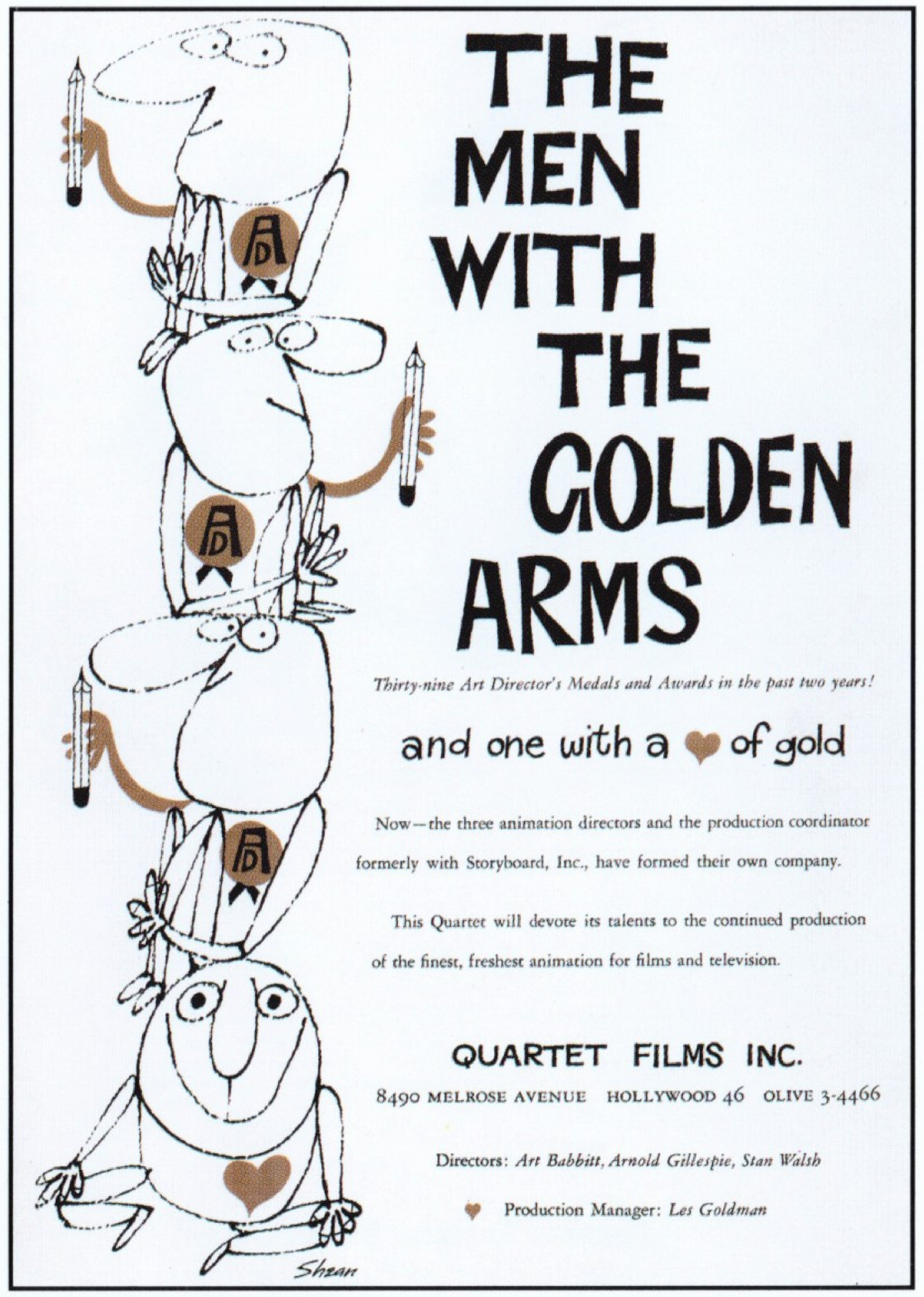
After the Hubleys moved to New York, John curtailed his advertising activities but still produced a number of memorable commercials, including the classic Marky Maypo spots, a charming full-color spot for Prudential Insurance titled "The Lion and the Mouse," and borderline abstract TV show openings for the CBS series *The 7 Lively Arts* and *The Twentieth Century*.



TWENTY ONE MEDAL AWARDS, MERIT AWARDS AND CERTIFICATE FOR TELEVISION SPOTS ✻ 1955 EXHIBITIONS OF ADVERTISING ART AND DESIGN – NEW YORK, LOS ANGELES, SAN FRANCISCO, DETROIT ✻ created by JOHN HUBLEY, BOB GUIDI, MILT SCHAEFER, AL SHEAN, CHRIS JENKINS ✻ ARNOLD GILLESPIE, ART BABBITT, STAN WALSH, TED PARMALEE ✻ FRED GRABLE, C. L. HARTMAN, EMORY HAWKINS, BILL LITTLEJOHN, WILLIAM MELENDEZ, LLOYD VAUGHAN, NORM FERGUSON, ROD SCRIBNER ✻ CHARLES McELMURRY, JERRY NEVIUS, DEAN SPILLE, PAUL JULIAN, JOHN URIE ✻ PEGGY DRUMM, MARY CAIN AND CREW, AURIL THOMPSON AND CREW ✻ MARK LETHERMAN, SAM MOORE, JR. ✻ PHIL KELLISON, TOM BARNES ✻ GERARD BALDWIN, FRANK ONAITIS, AL PABIAN, LLOYD REESE, GEORGE WHEELER

STORYBOARD INC.

8490 MELROSE AVENUE, HOLLYWOOD 46



THE MEN WITH THE GOLDEN ARMS

Thirty-nine Art Director's Medals and Awards in the past two years!

and one with a ♥ of gold

Now—the three animation directors and the production coordinator formerly with Storyboard, Inc., have formed their own company.

This Quartet will devote its talents to the continued production of the finest, freshest animation for films and television.

QUARTET FILMS INC.

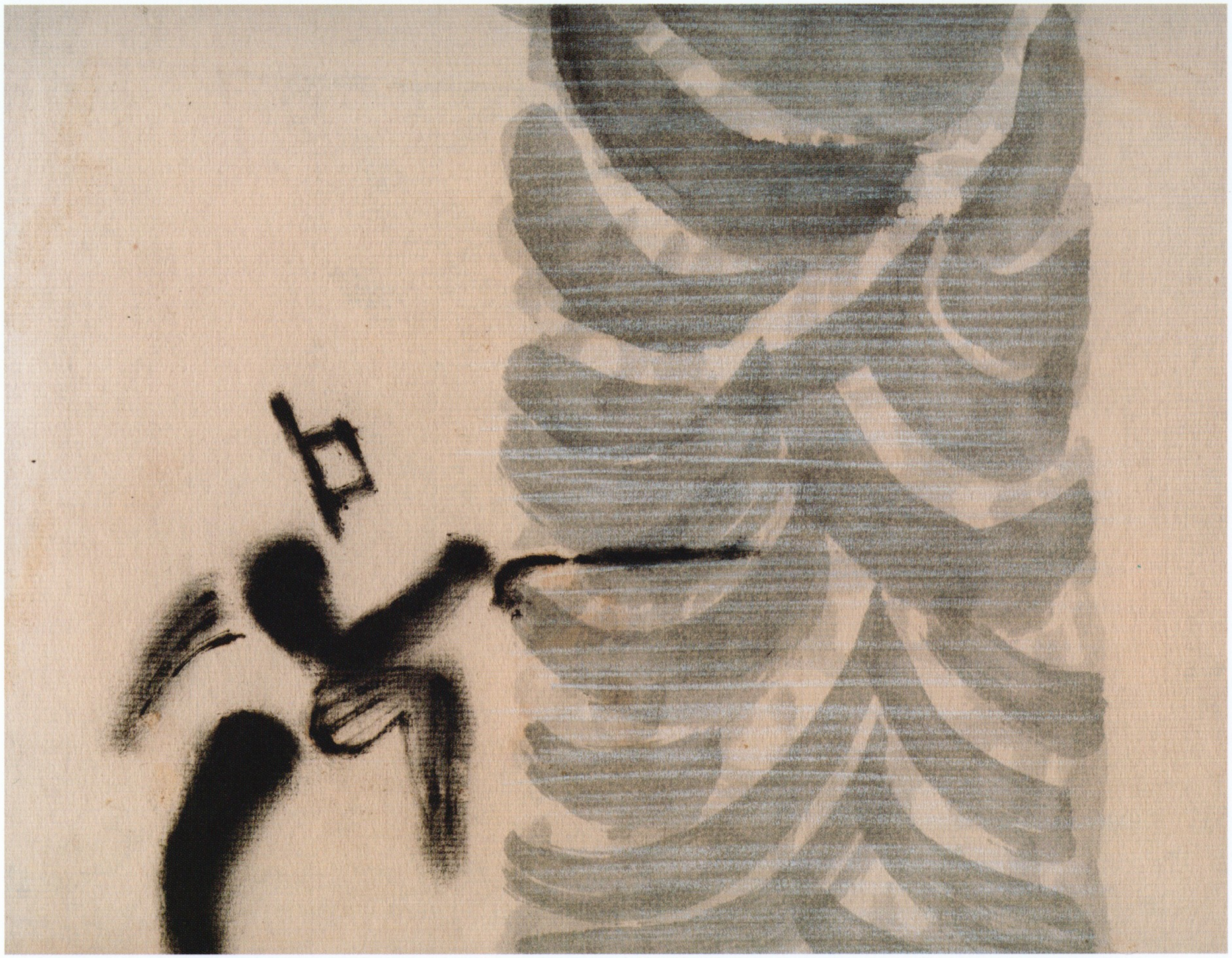
8490 MELROSE AVENUE HOLLYWOOD 46 OLIVE 3-4466

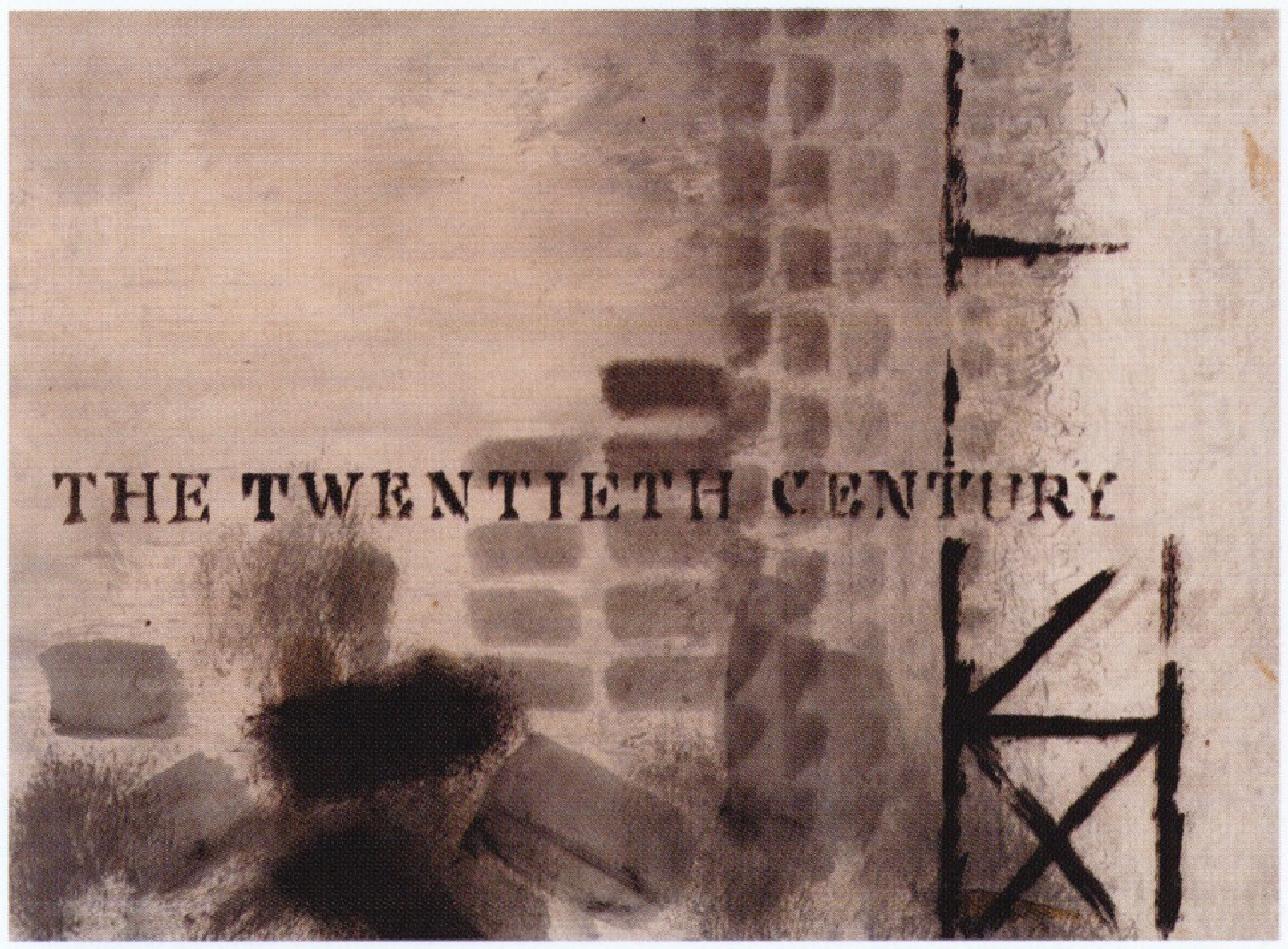
Directors: *Art Babbitt, Arnold Gillespie, Stan Walsh*

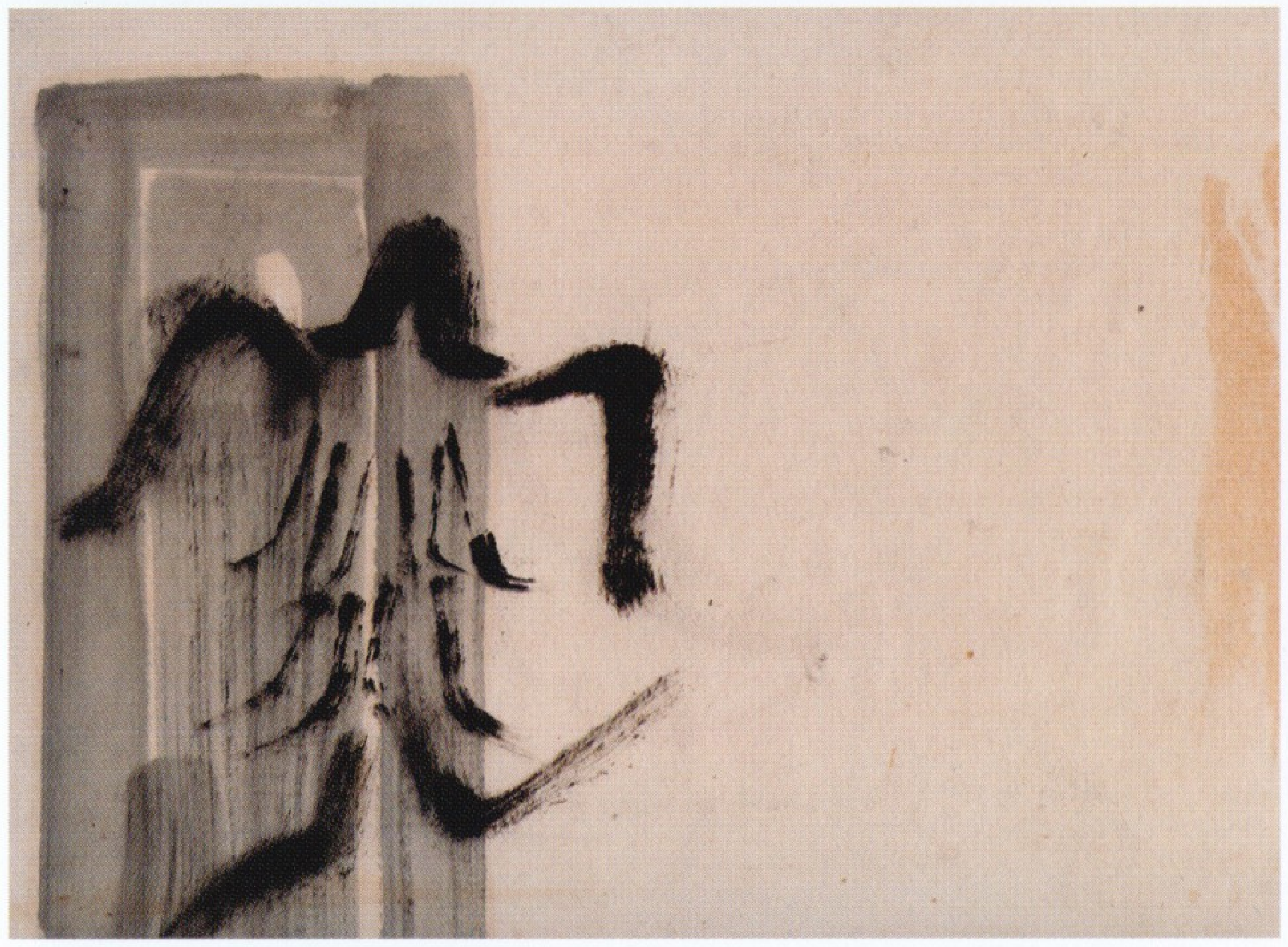
♥ Production Manager: *Les Goldman*

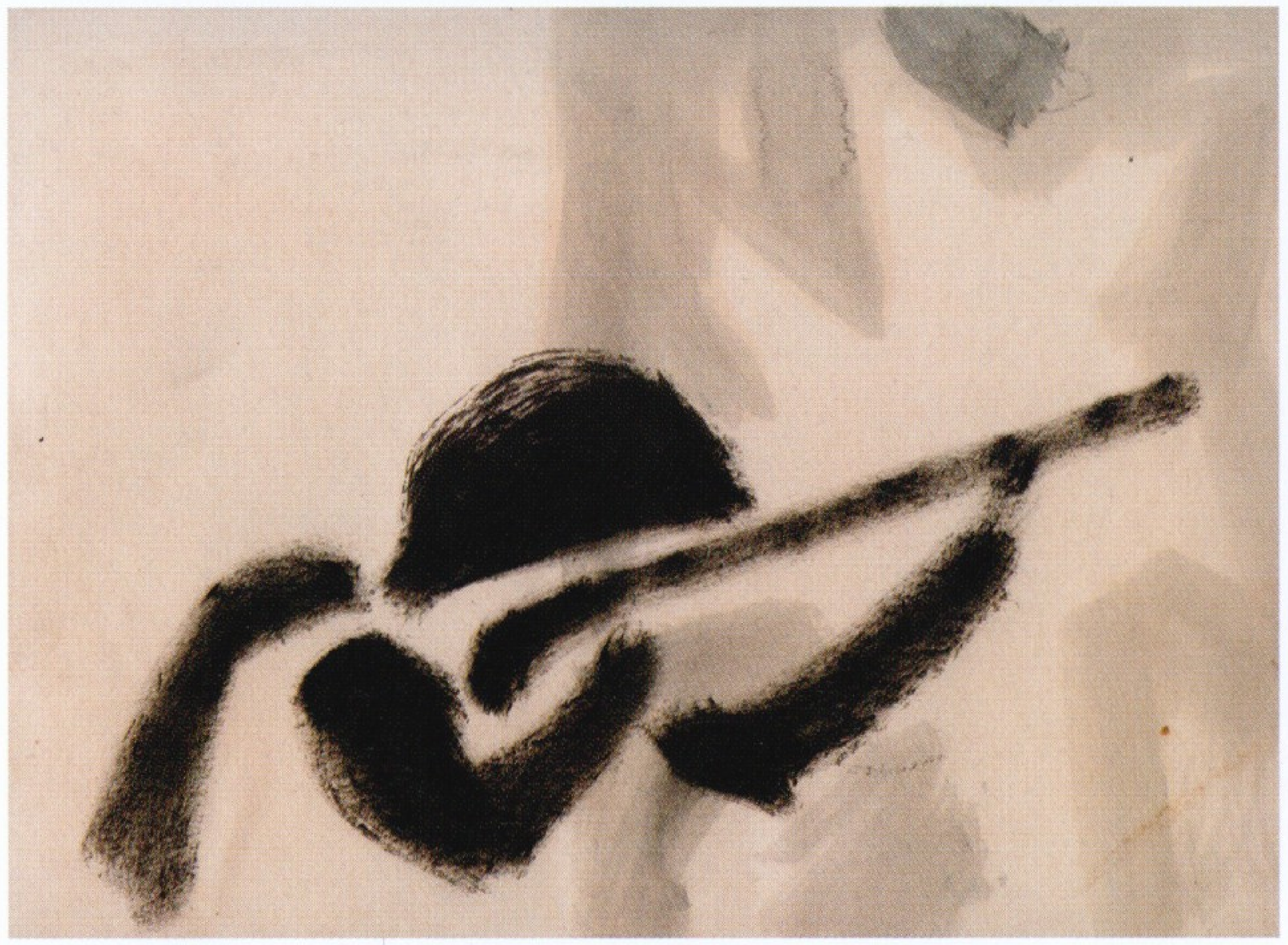
Above: A 1955 Storyboard trade advertisement that gives credit to all the artists working at the studio. The ad was drawn and designed by Bob Guidi.

Right: After John and Faith Hubley moved their studio to New York, Storyboard's three primary directors, along with its production coordinator, regrouped to start a new studio, Quartet Films. This 1956 trade advertisement, drawn by animation storyman and designer Al Shean, announces the studio's formation.




THE TWENTIETH CENTURY





***The Twentieth Century* (1957)**
Designer: John Hubley

Storyboard drawings by Hubley for the opening titles of a CBS documentary series.

THE ADVENTURES OF *, TENDER GAME, AND MOONBIRD

In fall 1955, Hubley was commissioned to create an animated film for the Simon R. Guggenheim Museum that would be based around the message, "There is more than one way to look at things." *The Adventures of ** (1957) became the first animated film produced and financed by an art museum, and the Guggenheim's curator, James Johnson Sweeney, served as producer and coauthor. *Variety* described the film as such:

> *The short may well stir some debate since its "message" is often in the eye of the beholder, like modern art itself. But the thesis is clear enough: the asterisk is alive, interested, open-minded, able to see new things, appreciate adventure (in color and design) and in consequence has a lot of fun. Put another way, the asterisk is "modern." His father, cartooned as a wobbly lump, is "old fogey"—not necessarily to be translated as "academic."*

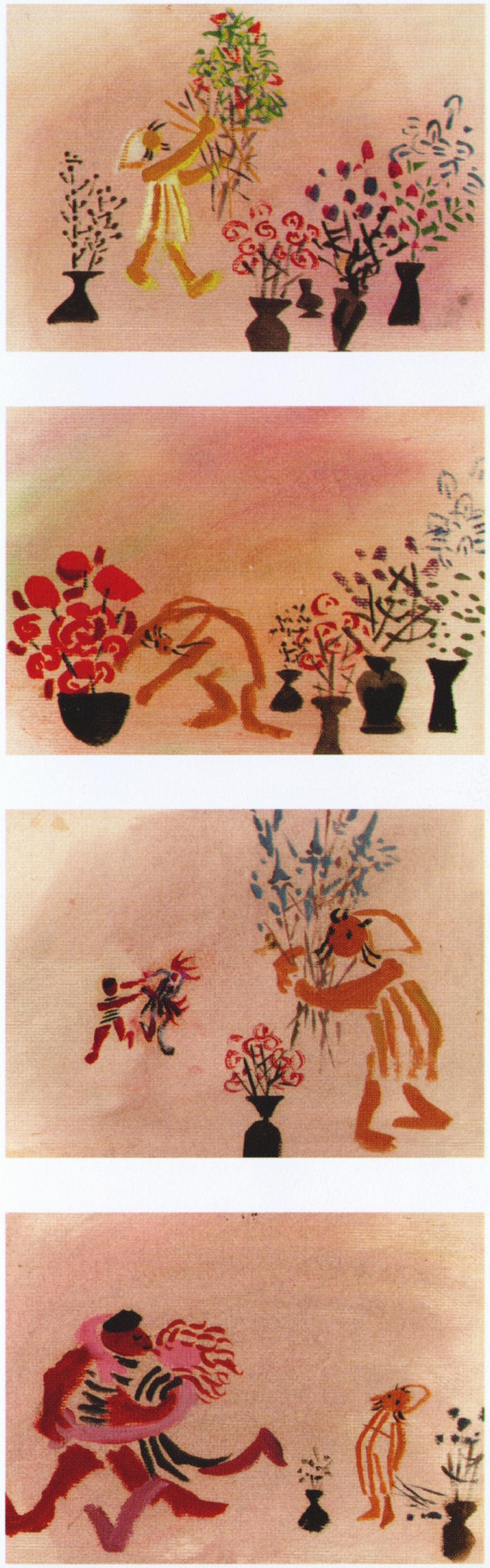
The film was the first animated production that John collaborated on with Faith, and it represents his strongest break from standard Hollywood animation styling. The characters in the film effortlessly glide back and forth between representational figures and abstract symbols and are set in a rich, densely layered world of color that makes use of a wide range of impressionistic and abstract painting theories. The film, according to John, was the result of wanting "to play around with more plasticity," which is particularly evident in the uninhibited animation of Emery Hawkins. Hubley continues:

> *We wanted to get a graphic look that had never been seen before. So we played with the wax-resist technique: drawing with wax and splashing it with watercolor to produce a resisted texture. We ended up waxing all the drawings and spraying them and double-exposing them. We did the backgrounds the same way. It photographed with a very rich waxy texture.*

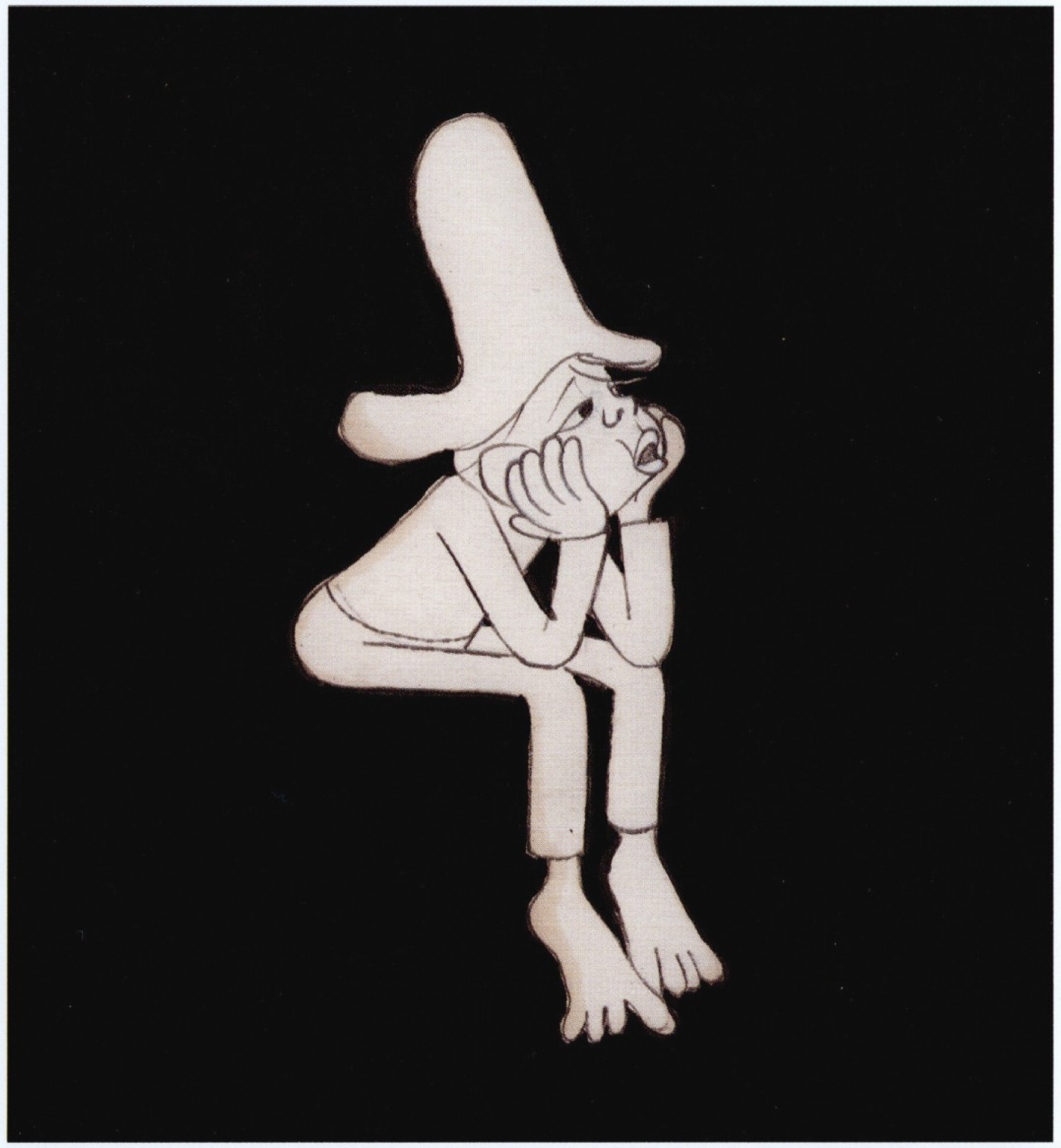
The early Storyboard shorts experimented freely with styles and techniques, such as *Tender Game* (1958), which made use of segmented figures, and *Moonbird* (1959), in which the characters were drawn traditionally on paper but then surrounded by a wash of black oil paint and double exposed. More importantly, these films eliminated the hard ink-outlines that had existed in most animation up until that time, and attempted to create a more fluid painterly integration of figures and background. These films, collectively, were instrumental in jump-starting the overseas animation renaissance during the early 1960s. John Hubley specifically cites *The Adventures of **, saying that, "For a while that little * became a symbol in Europe of the breakthrough for animation. From that point on artists started exploring millions of different graphic techniques."

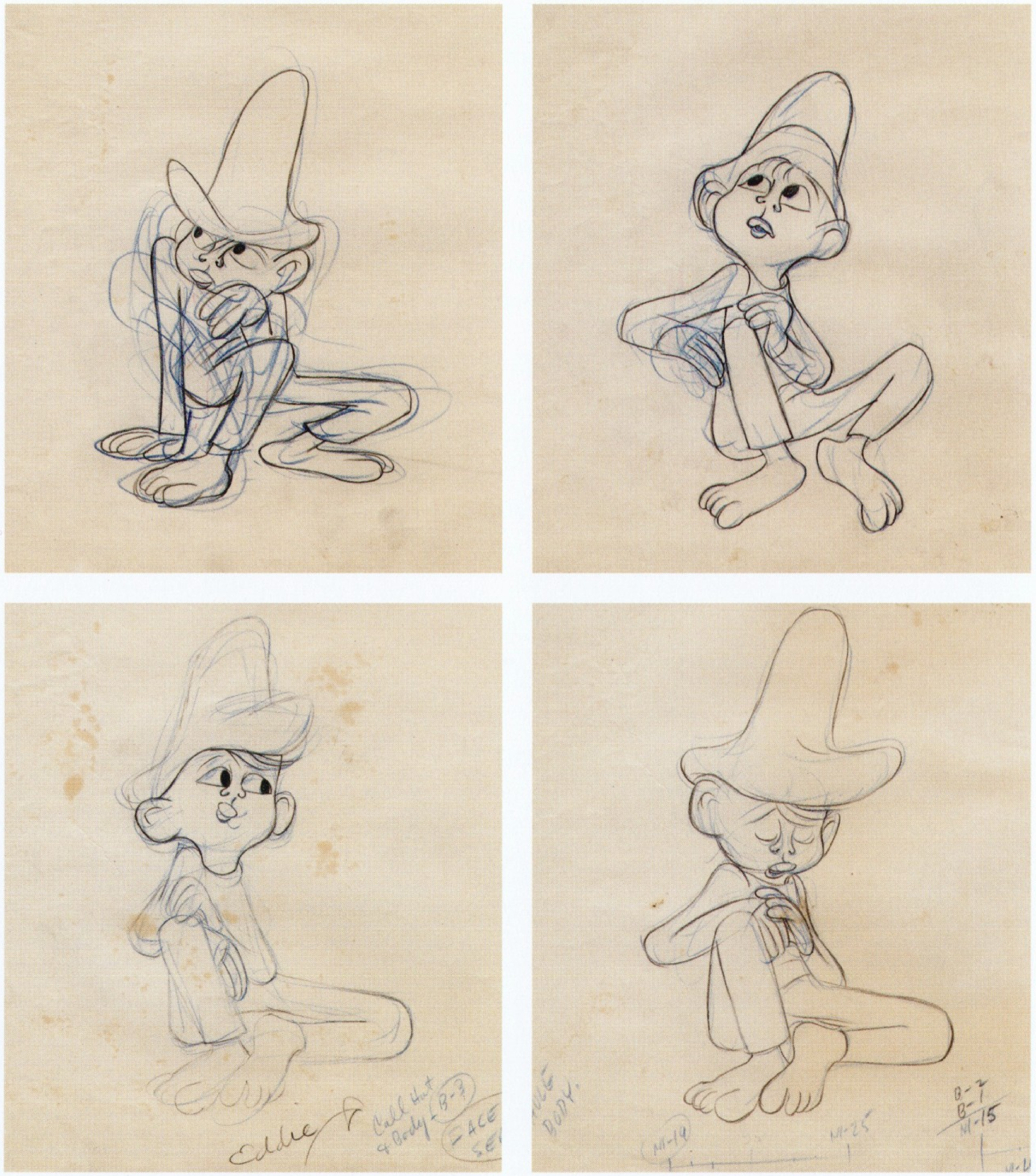
The independent shorts that John Hubley produced with Faith were not so much revolutionary as they were an extension and evolution of many of the ideas that he had explored in his earlier commercial work. The segmented figures in *Tender Game* was a concept that had appeared before in the UPA industrial film *More than Meets the Eye* and in the E-Z Pop Popcorn commercial "Bop Corn" (1954). The improvisational soundtrack of *Moonbird* (using the voices of the Hubleys' two sons) had roots in the UPA character Mister Magoo, when Hubley had allowed veteran actor Jim Backus to improvise many of the character's lines. The major difference was that these later films were produced outside of a commercial context, allowing the Hubleys to make their stylistic choices more pronounced and integral to the film's composition.

John and Faith Hubley produced films together until John's death in 1977, during the production of *A Doonesbury Special* (NBC). Faith Hubley continued producing independent films of her own until passing away in 2001.

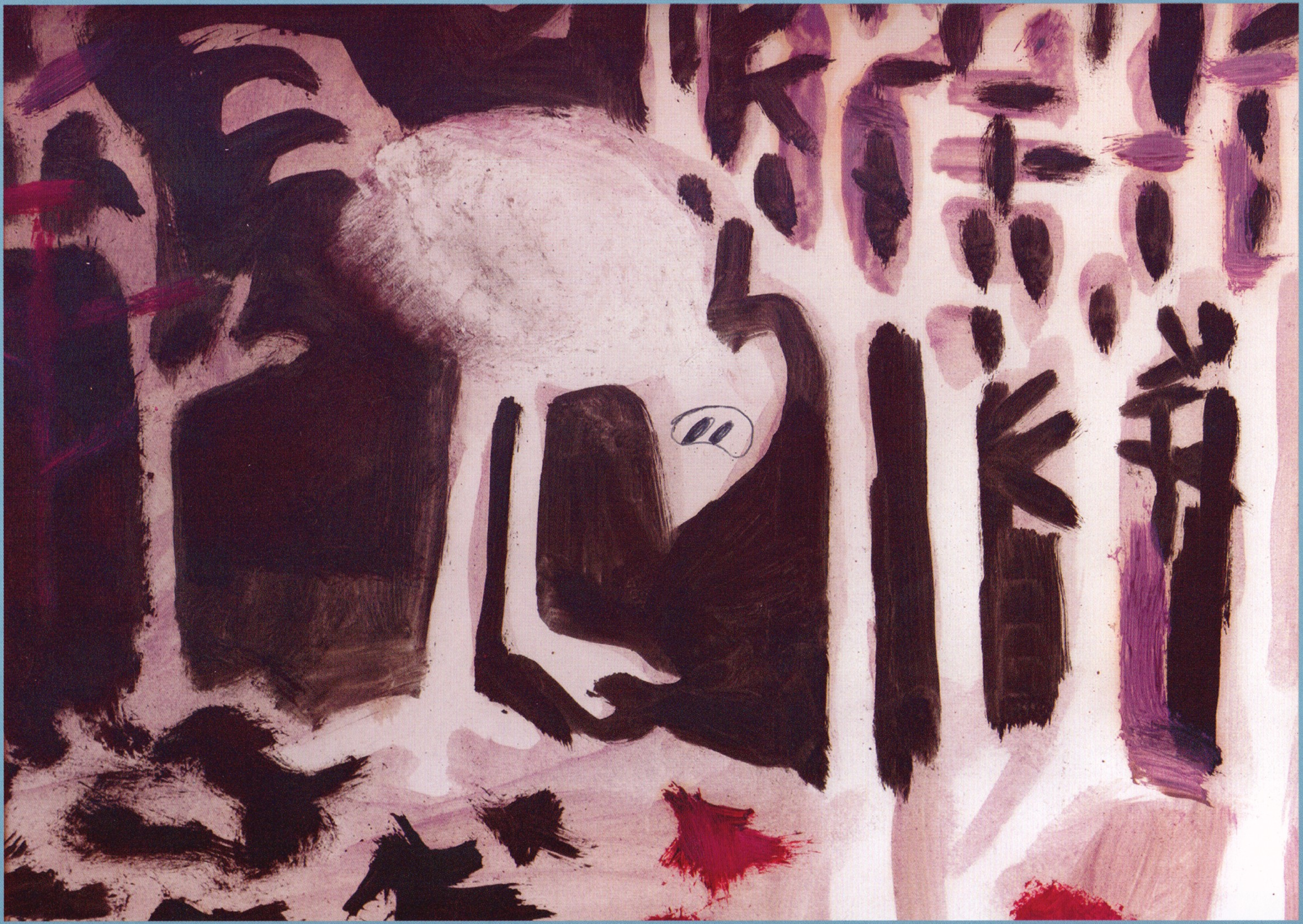


Opposite and right:
***TENDER GAME* (1958)**
Director: John Hubley
Series of story sketches
painted by Hubley




Eddie
Cell Hat & Body B-7
FACE SE
BODY.
M-19
M-25
B-2
B-1
M-15

***Moonbird* (1959)**
Director: John Hubley
Above: Finished animation drawing
Above right: Series of animation drawings by Bobe Cannon
Opposite: Concept painting by Hubley



T

TERRYTOONS

Terrytoons was the East Coast's oldest animation outfit. The studio had been producing theatrical shorts primarily for 20th Century Fox since 1930, its films virtually indistinguishable from one another, busted out in assembly-line fashion with the speed and efficiency of a factory producing soap or cereal—and with an equal disregard for artistic ambition. The Terrytoons cartoons of the 1950s were hopelessly outdated relics, relying on rote gags and stories, formulaic characters like Mighty Mouse and Heckle & Jeckle, and a standard of animation that could best be described as "If it moves, let it go." All this changed in 1956, when a brief but fruitful mini-renaissance occurred at the studio; almost overnight, the studio began producing stylish, graphically challenging theatrical shorts. Films of this caliber produced at another studio would have been a noteworthy achievement, but that they were produced at Terrytoons is nothing short of miraculous. The shift in the studio's output can be attributed primarily to the efforts of one individual: Gene Deitch.

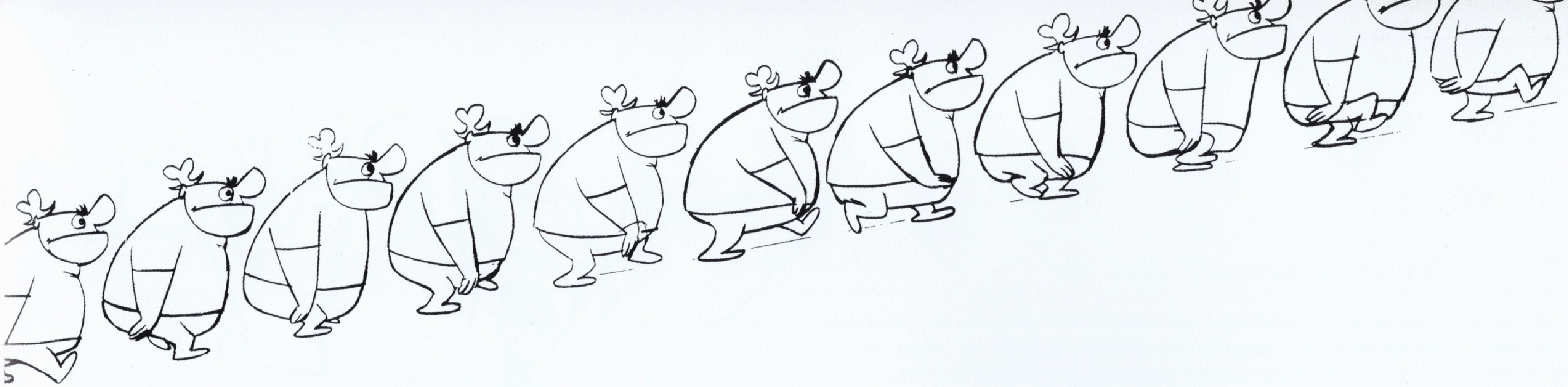
The turnaround began when CBS purchased Terrytoons from its founder, Paul Terry, in 1955. Though the network was primarily interested in the studio's library of older cartoons that could be used for the fledgling television market, they were so appalled by the studio's lax production standards and uninspired output that they immediately began a campaign to create a new image for the studio. CBS recruited thirty-one-year-old Gene Deitch, who had recently left his post as creative director of UPA-NY, as Terrytoons's new creative director. Deitch accepted the position hoping that the studio's utter indifference to quality would make it easier for him to institute changes. He relished the opportunity to transform Terrytoons into a design powerhouse: "It was the dream challenge of every red-blooded 100% American boy animator; a chance to remake the world's worst animation studio into the best."

The studio, in the New York City suburb of New Rochelle, was in such sorry rundown shape that CBS kept delaying taking Deitch to the studio during negotiations. When he first arrived at the studio, his first order of business was to simply create better working conditions for the Terrytoons artists. With the support of CBS, Deitch had the studio repainted, bought new furniture, and gave inkers and opaquers their own cubicles to work in (replacing the sweatshoplike arrangement of long rows of desks). A state-of-the-art projection system and new animation cameras were also installed. Deitch redesigned the Terrytoons logo and created a title card—signed by every staff member—which appeared in front of the films, a gesture meant to show his appreciation for each artist's contribution. In another gesture of goodwill, Deitch promised not to fire any of the artists, instead opting to construct his modern vision around the studio veterans. He augmented the existing crew with as many like-minded young artists as he could, including Jules Feiffer, Tod Dockstader, Al Kouzel, Ray Favata, Ernie Pintoff, and Len Glasser.

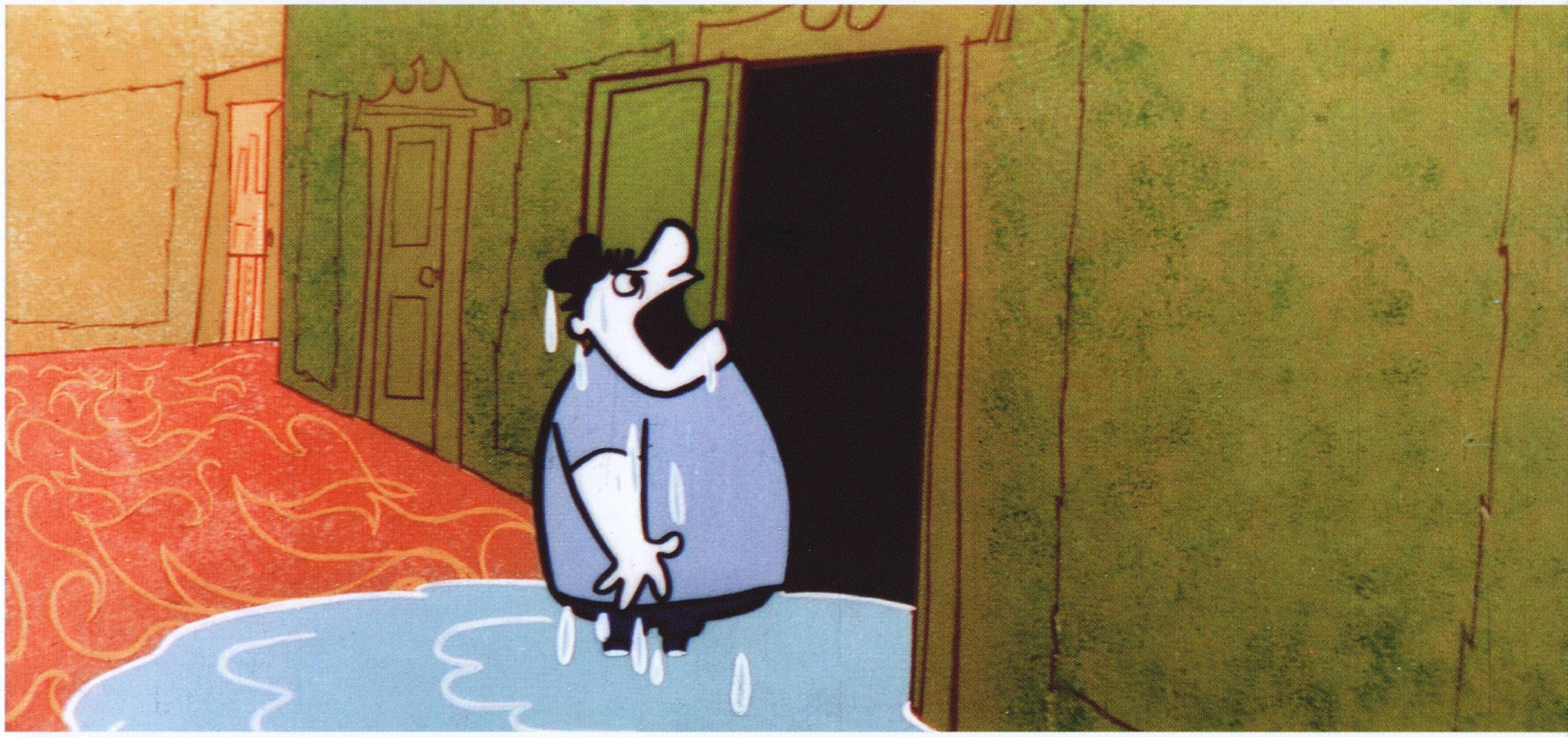
In 2001, Deitch reflected on his vision for the new studio:

> *My overriding goal was to reinvent Terrytoons, to create a new reputation, to win the support of the disgruntled staff, to revise, where practical, films in production, without interrupting workflow, and mainly to rebuild the story department, bringing in fresh talent such as Jules Feiffer and Al Kouzel, to inspire Tommy Morrison, Larz Bourne, Eli Bauer, and others already on the story staff; to venture into fresh territory. I spent most of my own time in there with them; it all had to start with story and characters.*

For two years, this vision was a reality, and the results included groundbreaking



one-shot films like *Flebus* (1957), *The Juggler of Our Lady* (1958), and *Depth Study* (1958); a modern TV series, *Tom Terrific* (1957); and a whole new cast of theatrical cartoon characters. Under his leadership, a hitherto bottom-rung animation studio was transformed into a classy exponent of the modern approach. The modern makeover at Terrytoons wasn't meant to last, however. In spring 1958, just two short years after he began his experiment, Deitch was forced out of the studio following a bitter power struggle with the studio's longtime business manager, Bill Weiss.



***Springtime for Clobber* (1958)**
Director: Connie Rasinski
Top: Clint Clobber walk cycle from
Gene Deitch model sheet
Above: Film still

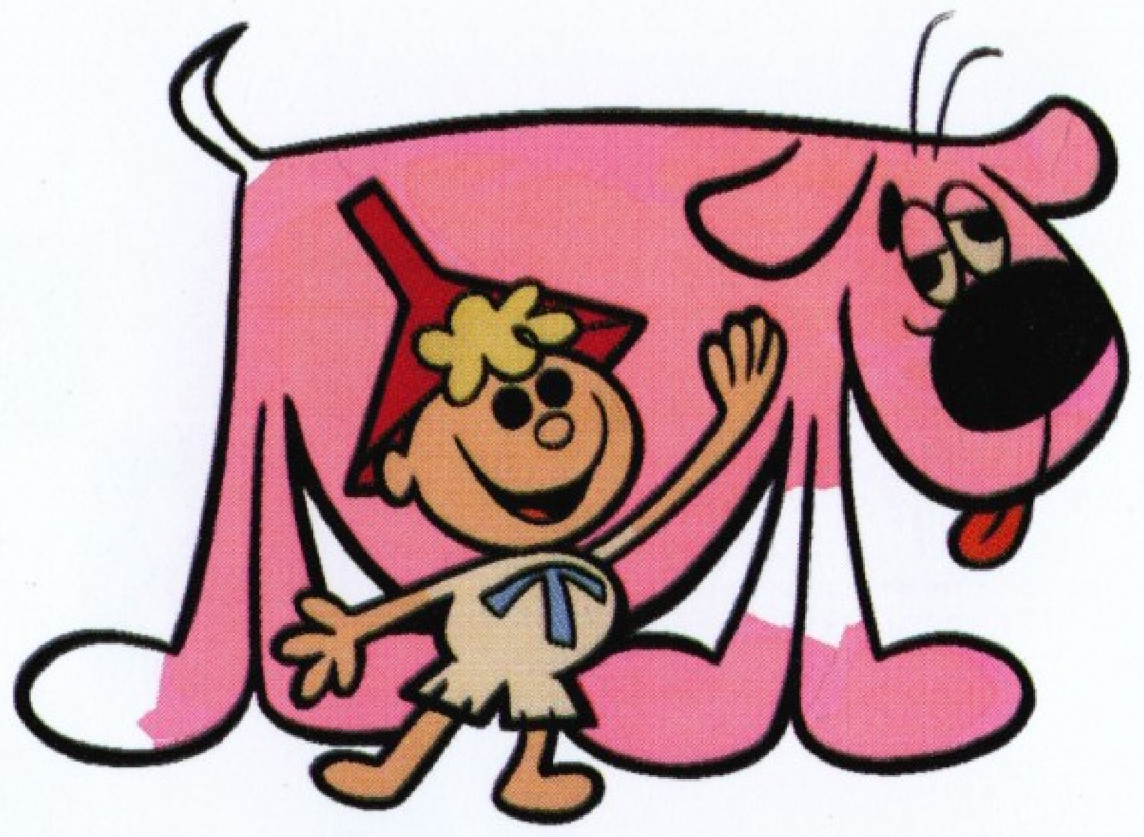
GENE DEITCH

When Gene Deitch (b. 1924) was discovered by UPA in 1946, he had been working as an assistant art director at CBS Radio. His claim to fame at the time was as cover artist and cartoonist for the traditional jazz magazine the *Record Changer*, and it was his drawings for this modest publication that had caught the eye of the UPA staff. UPA studio head Stephen Bosustow told the twenty-two-year-old Deitch that he was going to be trained as the "first pure UPA director"—pure in the sense that Deitch had no prior animation experience and could be molded in the thoroughly modern image of UPA animation. By the mid-1950s, many directors and designers were entering the animation business at design-oriented commercial studios without having worked their way up the traditional animation ladder of inbetweening and assistant animation, but in the mid-1940s, Deitch's entry into the animation world was considered highly unconventional.

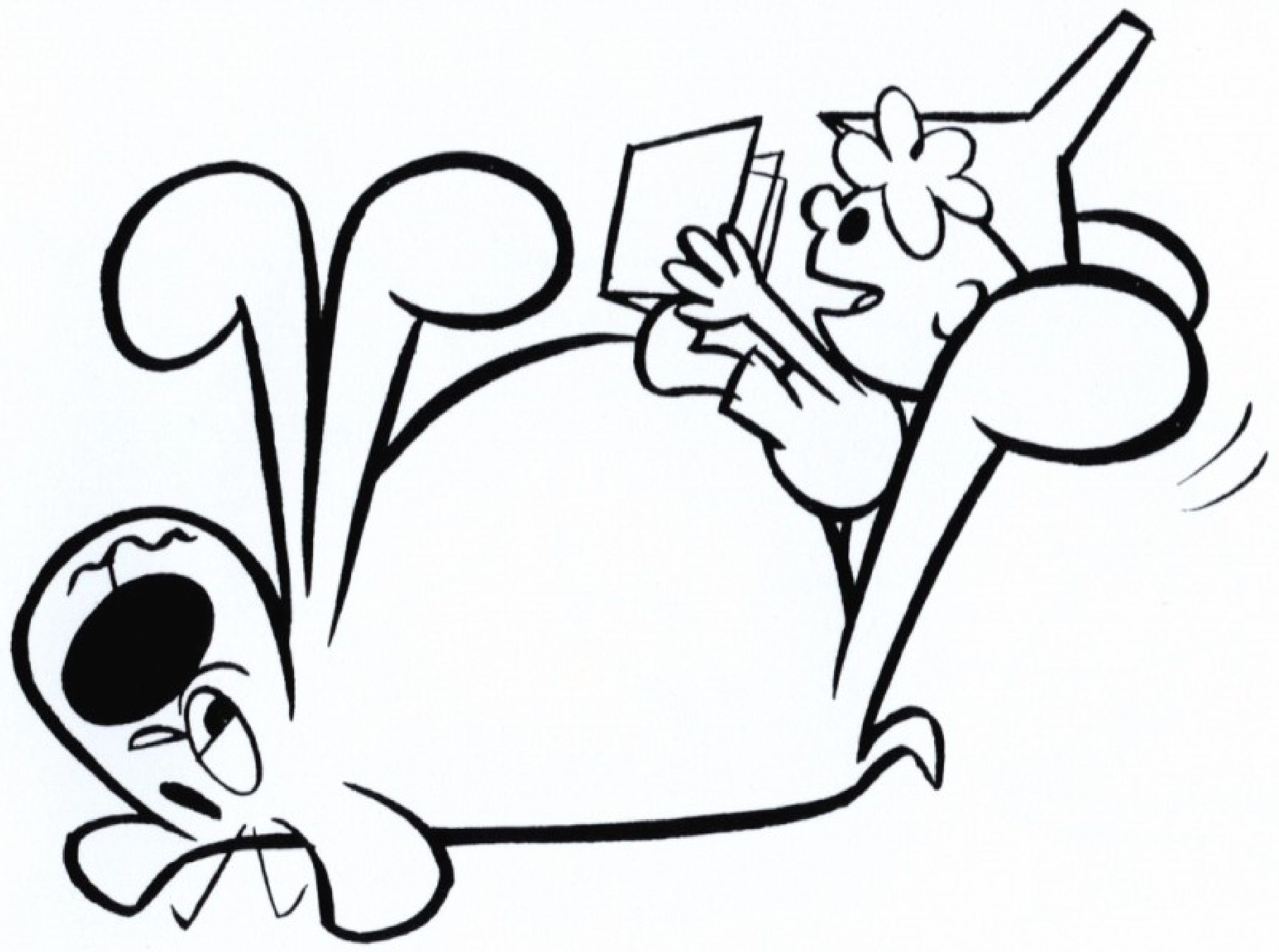
It is easy to see in Deitch's *Record Changer* artwork what made his style so appealing to the UPA crew. His characters are pure graphic creations, free compositions of lines and shapes that offer no allegiance to classical draftsmanship. Deitch's biggest influence at the time was, quite appropriately, the wildly inventive record-cover illustrator Jim Flora. Deitch's design-oriented drawing style was both exciting and frustrating to the other UPA artists, most of whom had had extensive arts training in school and at Disney. Bill Hurtz recalled that during production of UPA's first Columbia short, *Robin Hoodlum* (1948), when Deitch was asked to draw some layouts of the castle settings, "[his] stylized approach was to flatten everything out and this was very irritating to John [Hubley]." During his time at UPA, Deitch's most notable project was a pilot for 20th Century Fox, *Dusty of the Circus* (1949), for which he did the layouts and design. The film experimented with the technique of drawing directly onto frosted cels with Ebony pencils.

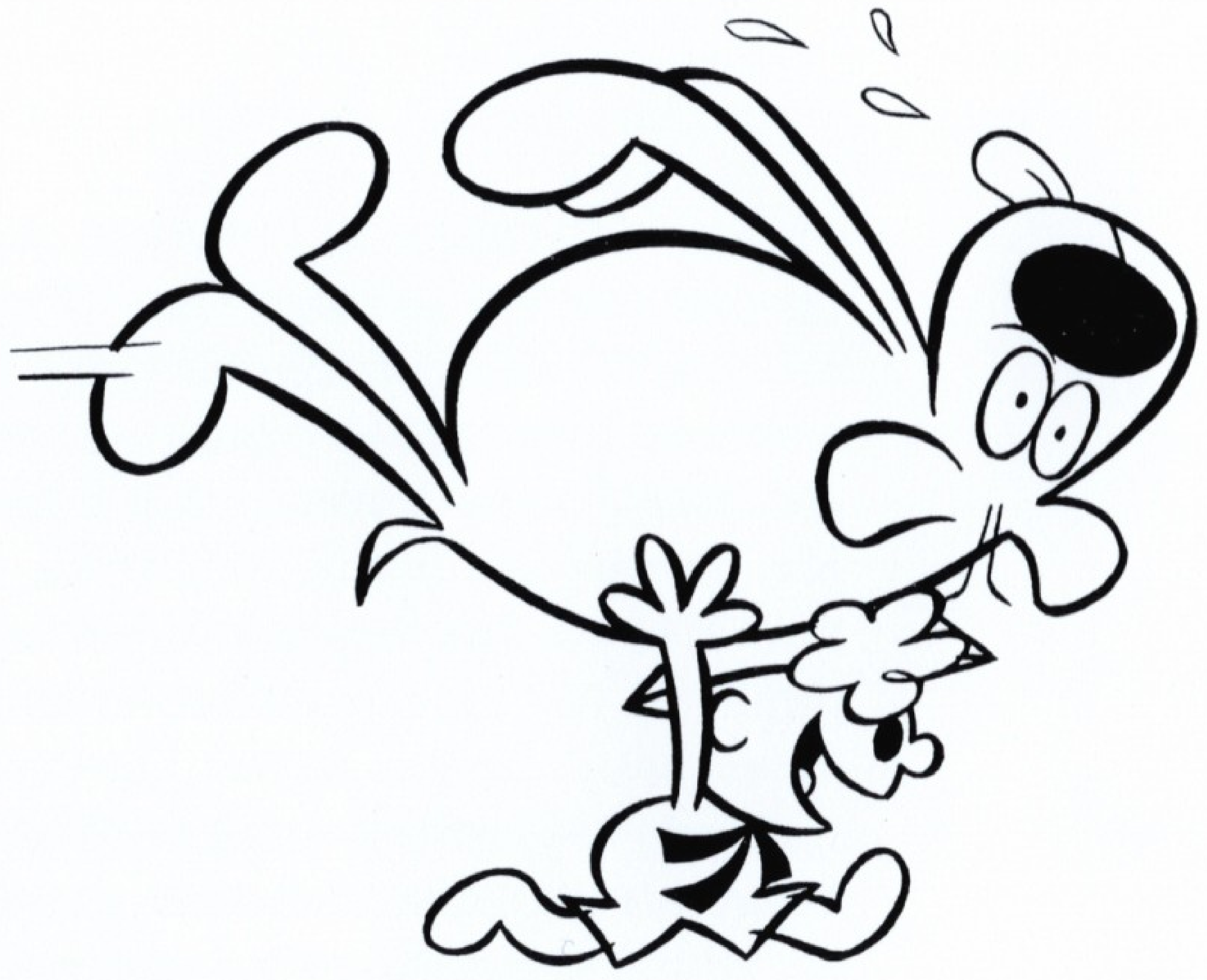
In 1949, Deitch accepted a position at industrial film producer Jam Handy Organization, in Detroit, where he received his first opportunity to direct. The handful of films he directed included *The Mite Box* ("a simplistic trifle about how church contributions bring color into the gray life of poor African natives"); *Wings for Roger Windsock*, which was a recruitment film for the U.S. Air Force; and an industrial film for Swift & Company called *Building Friends for Business*. Deitch returned to UPA in 1951, though this time he accepted a position at the studio's fledgling commercial division on the East Coast. He was originally tapped to be UPA-NY's lead production designer, but soon after his arrival, Deitch replaced Abe Liss in the top position of creative director. The supervisory role prepared him well for when he would take over Terrytoons, in 1956.

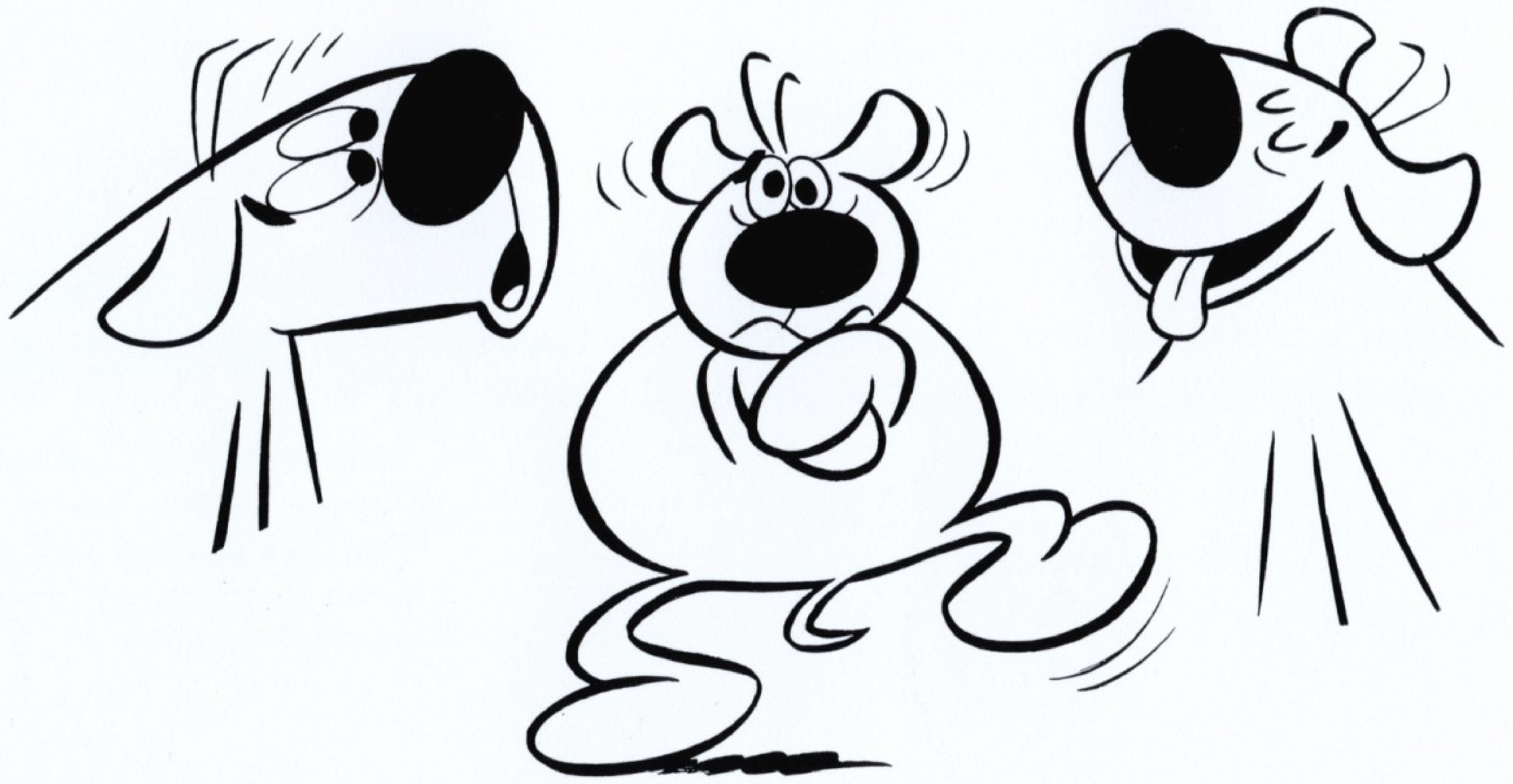
Following his productive, yet tumultuous two-year stint at Terrytoons, Deitch opened his own commercial studio, Gene Deitch Associates. One of Deitch's pet projects was to produce an animated adaptation of Jules Feiffer's *Munro*. He struck a deal in 1959 with producer William L. Snyder to make that film. The only stipulation was that the film had to be produced at a studio of Snyder's choice. That studio was located in Communist Czechoslovakia. Deitch traveled to Prague to visit the facilities, originally intending to stay for only ten days, but he fell in love with the studio's production manager, Zdenka Najmanová, and has lived there ever since. He continues to produce and direct films in the Czech Republic today.



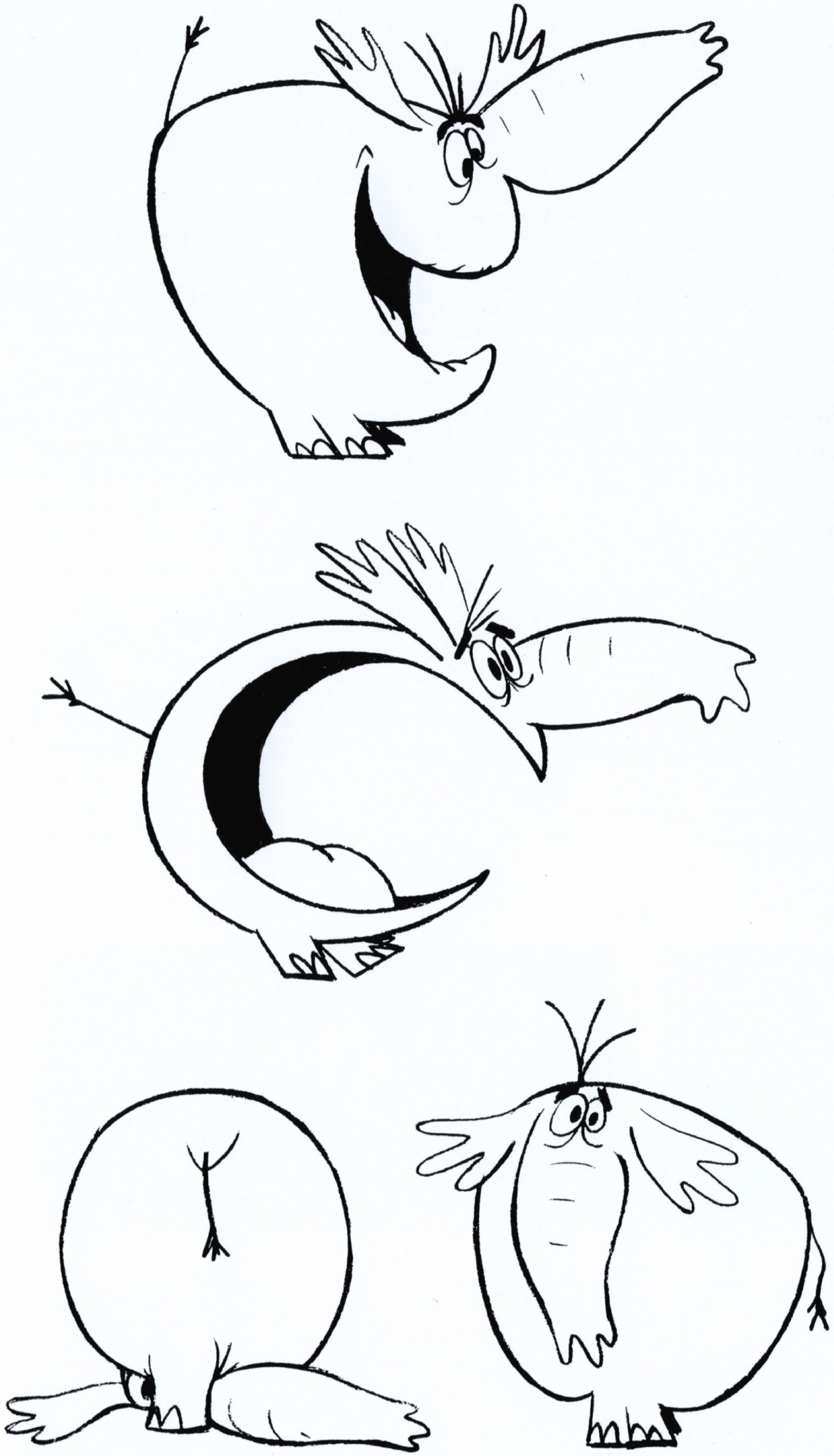
A color publicity cel created for *Tom Terrific*. Though the TV series was produced in black and white, the characters appeared in color in comic books and promotional materials.







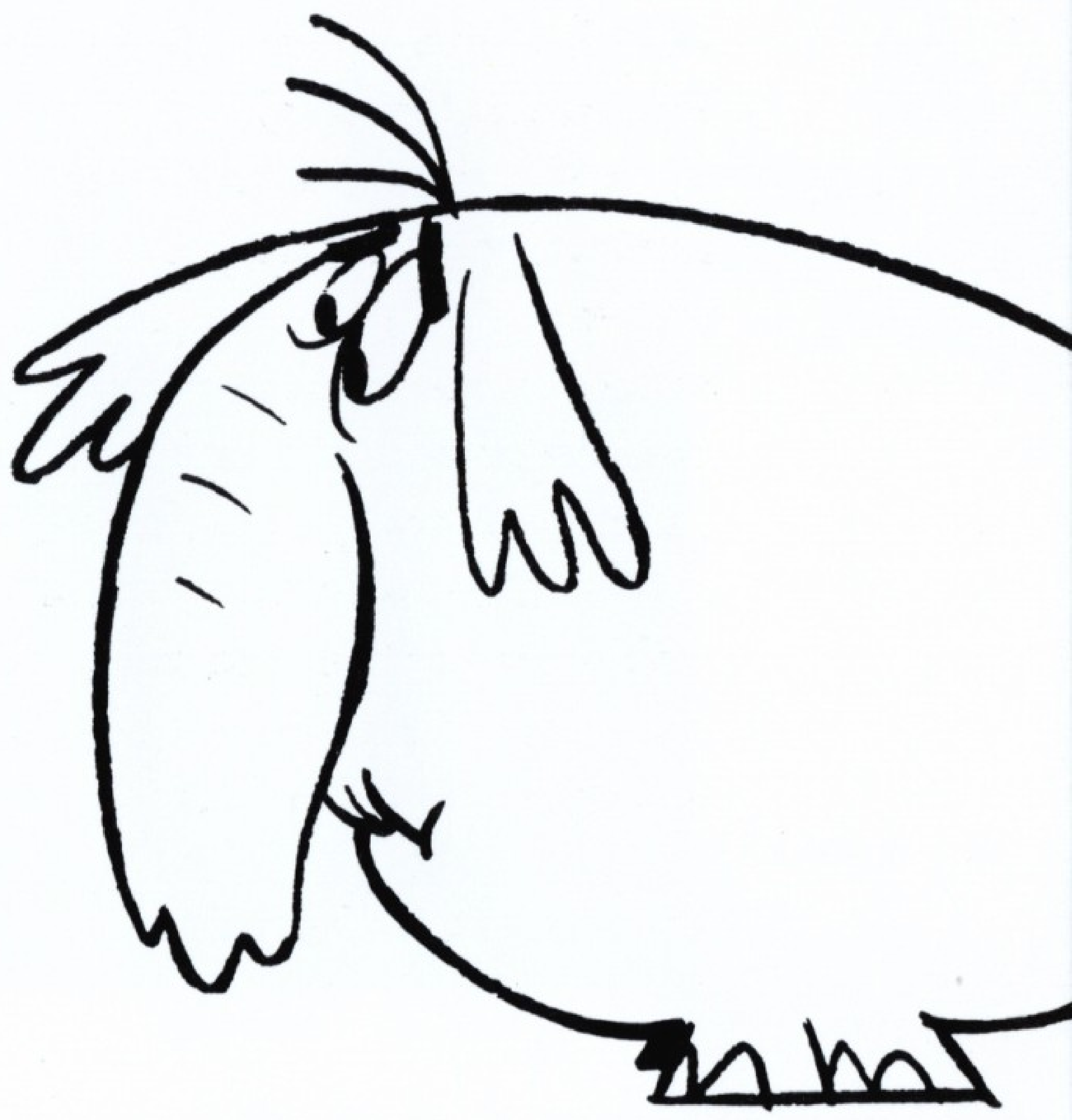
***Tom Terrific* (1957)**
Designer: Gene Deitch
Model sheet drawings of Tom Terrific and Mighty Manfred



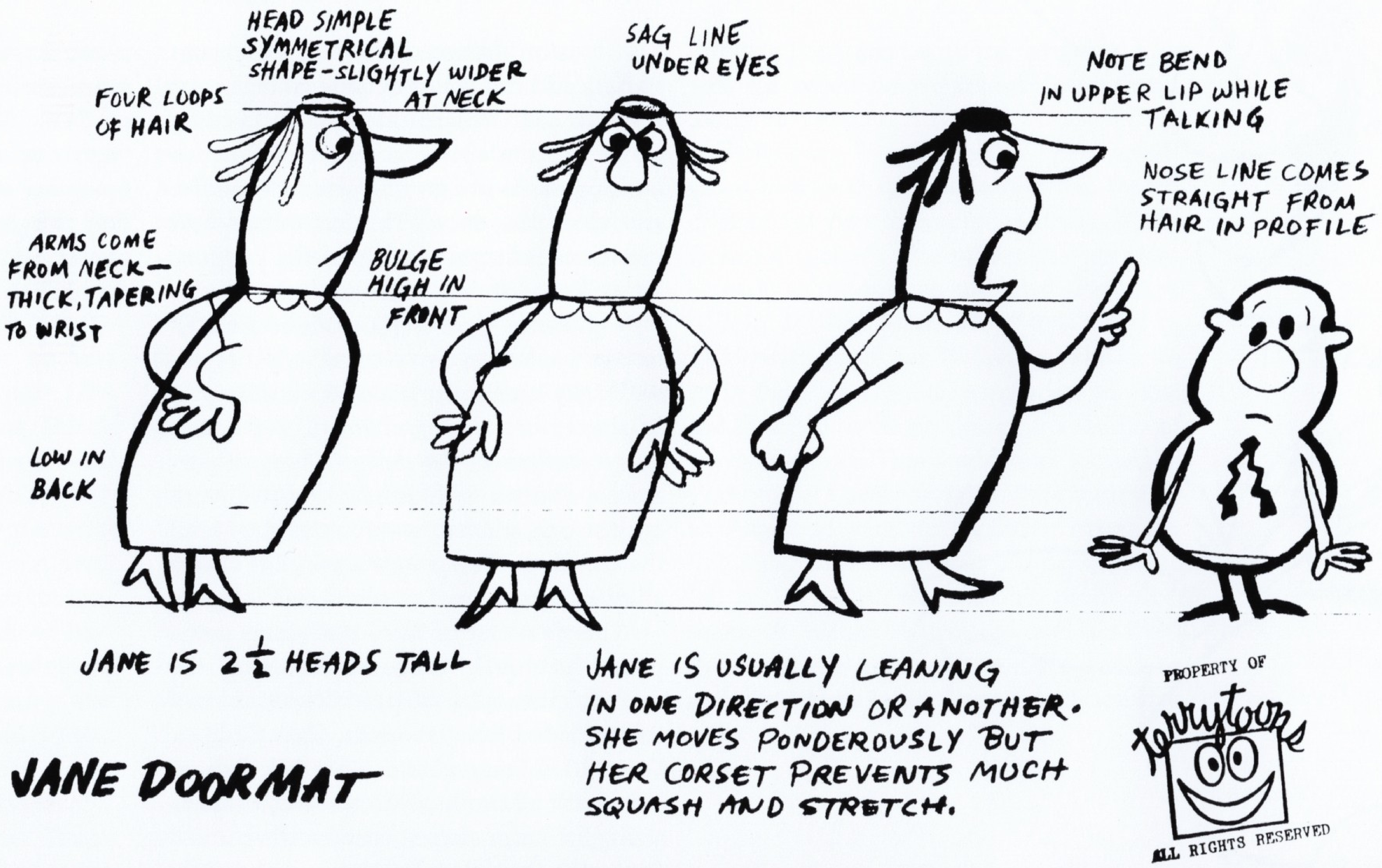
THE NEW TERRYTOONS STARS

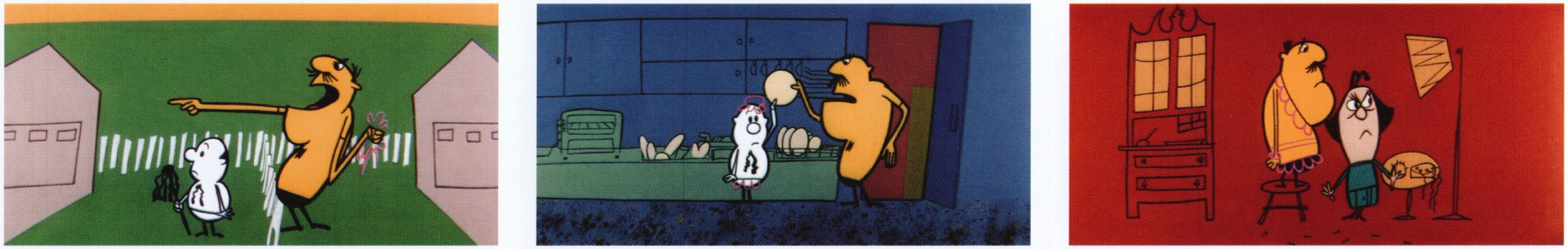
The tension between veteran Terrytoons staffers and the younger crew of designers and storymen was so thick that, according to one of the artists, at times "there was nothing to do but go into your own office and close the door." This old-versus-new tension is reflected visually in the cartoons as well: the shorts feature modern high-style characters, yet they are often animated in the haphazard Terrytoons style of old, with little attention afforded to the integrity of shapes or creating styles of movement that complement the design. These disparate approaches to filmmaking don't work against one another so much as they lend the Deitch-era Terrytoons a peculiar charm all their own.

The new cast of Terry characters comprised primarily humans, replacing the animal characters of past. These characters included John Doormat, Clint Clobber, Gaston Le Crayon, and Sick Sick Sidney. They were all extremely minimalist, emphasizing flat linear shapes, occasionally painted in single colors, with little ornament or decoration. The model sheets for *Dustcap Doormat* (1958), by Al Kouzel, reveal the utter simplicity of these films. John Doormat wears a necktie, but there is no other separation between his face and body to indicate clothing of any kind. He is then painted a solid color, placing even greater emphasis on the abstract nature of the character's construction. For the black-and-white television series *Tom Terrific*, which aired as part of CBS's *Captain Kangaroo* program, Deitch went one step further and eliminated the opaquing of the cels, leaving Tom and his dog, Mighty Manfred, completely transparent, with the backgrounds showing through their bodies.



***SICK SICK SIDNEY* (1958)**
Director: Art Bartsch
Model sheet drawings
by Gene Deitch

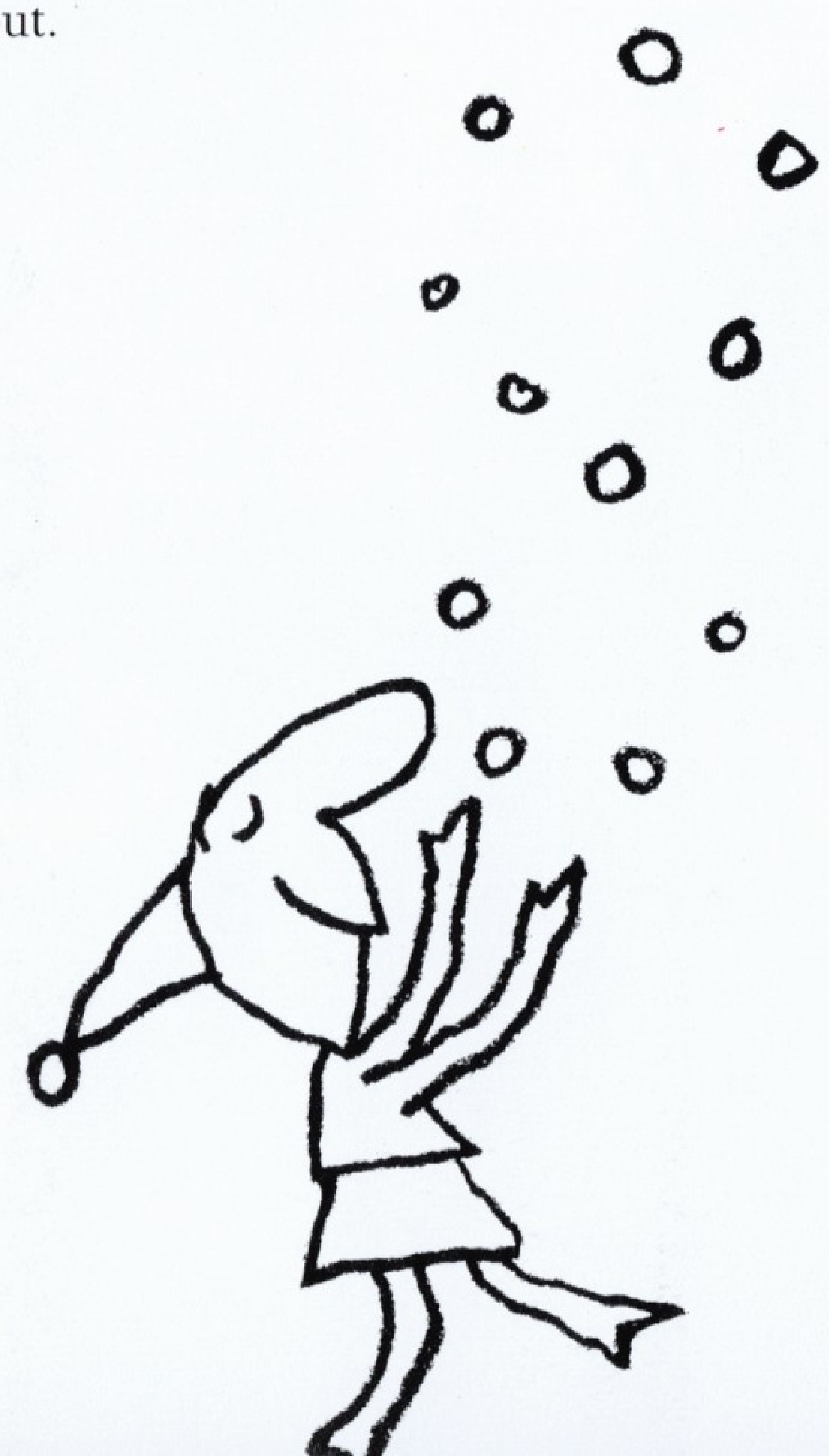

HEAD SIMPLE SYMMETRICAL SHAPE - SLIGHTLY WIDER AT NECK
SAG LINE UNDER EYES
NOTE BEND IN UPPER LIP WHILE TALKING
FOUR LOOPS OF HAIR
NOSE LINE COMES STRAIGHT FROM HAIR IN PROFILE
ARMS COME FROM NECK — THICK, TAPERING TO WRIST
BULGE HIGH IN FRONT
LOW IN BACK
JANE IS 2 1/2 HEADS TALL
JANE IS USUALLY LEANING IN ONE DIRECTION OR ANOTHER. SHE MOVES PONDEROUSLY BUT HER CORSET PREVENTS MUCH SQUASH AND STRETCH.
JANE DOORMAT
PROPERTY OF
terrytoons
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

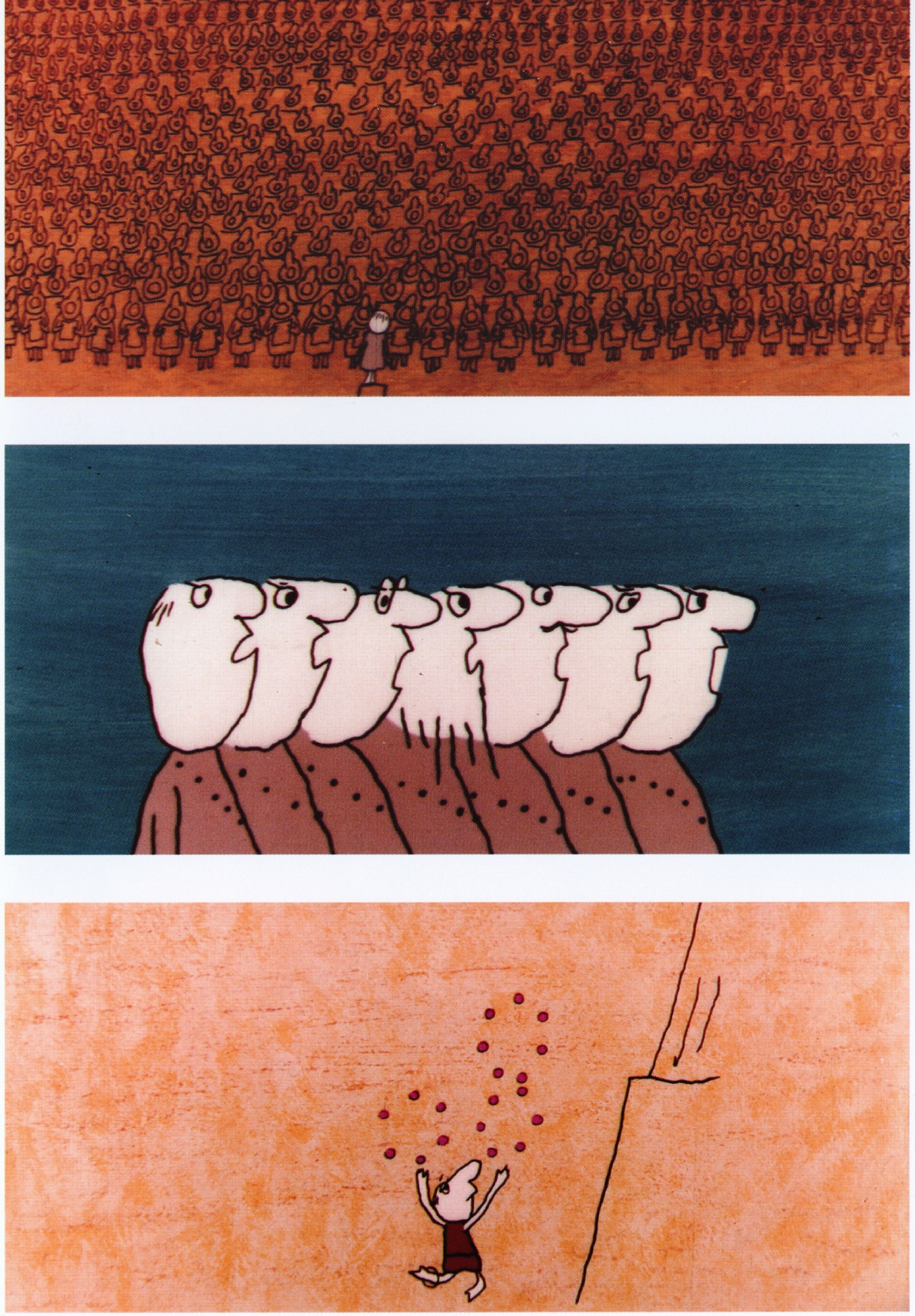


Dustcap Doormat **(1958)**
Director: Al Kouzel
Top: Model sheet drawings by Kouzel
Above: Film stills

The Juggler of Our Lady

All of the Deitch-era Terrytoons were produced in Cinemascope, but few of them took advantage of the wide screen as elegantly as *The Juggler of Our Lady.* The film is a faithful translation of R. O. Blechman's nervous staccato drawing style, juxtaposing his diminutive characters against an expansive screen. Blechman was understandably reluctant about allowing Terrytoons to adapt his illustrated storybook, fearing that they would be unable to capture the subtlety of his drawing style. "I was literally on the phone with Bob every night for nearly a year before he finally relented," Gene Deitch confesses. "I assured him over and over again, that we would be absolutely true to his story and faithful to his graphic style. My ace card was Al Kouzel, one of the finest artists who ever worked with me. I knew that I could rely on Al to perfectly get Bob Blechman's images unscathed onto the big screen." Kouzel (1923–1990) not only directed the film, but he also animated the entire short by himself, as a means of ensuring a consistent Blechman style throughout.





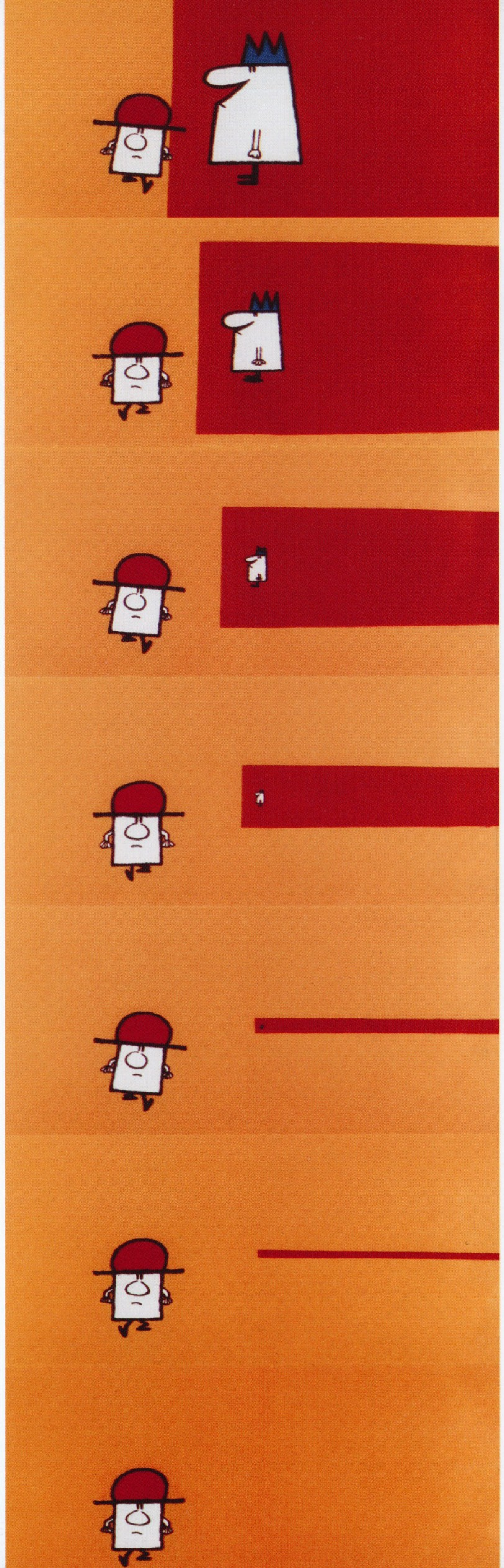
***The Juggler of Our Lady* (1958)**
Director: Al Kouzel
Film stills

FLEBUS

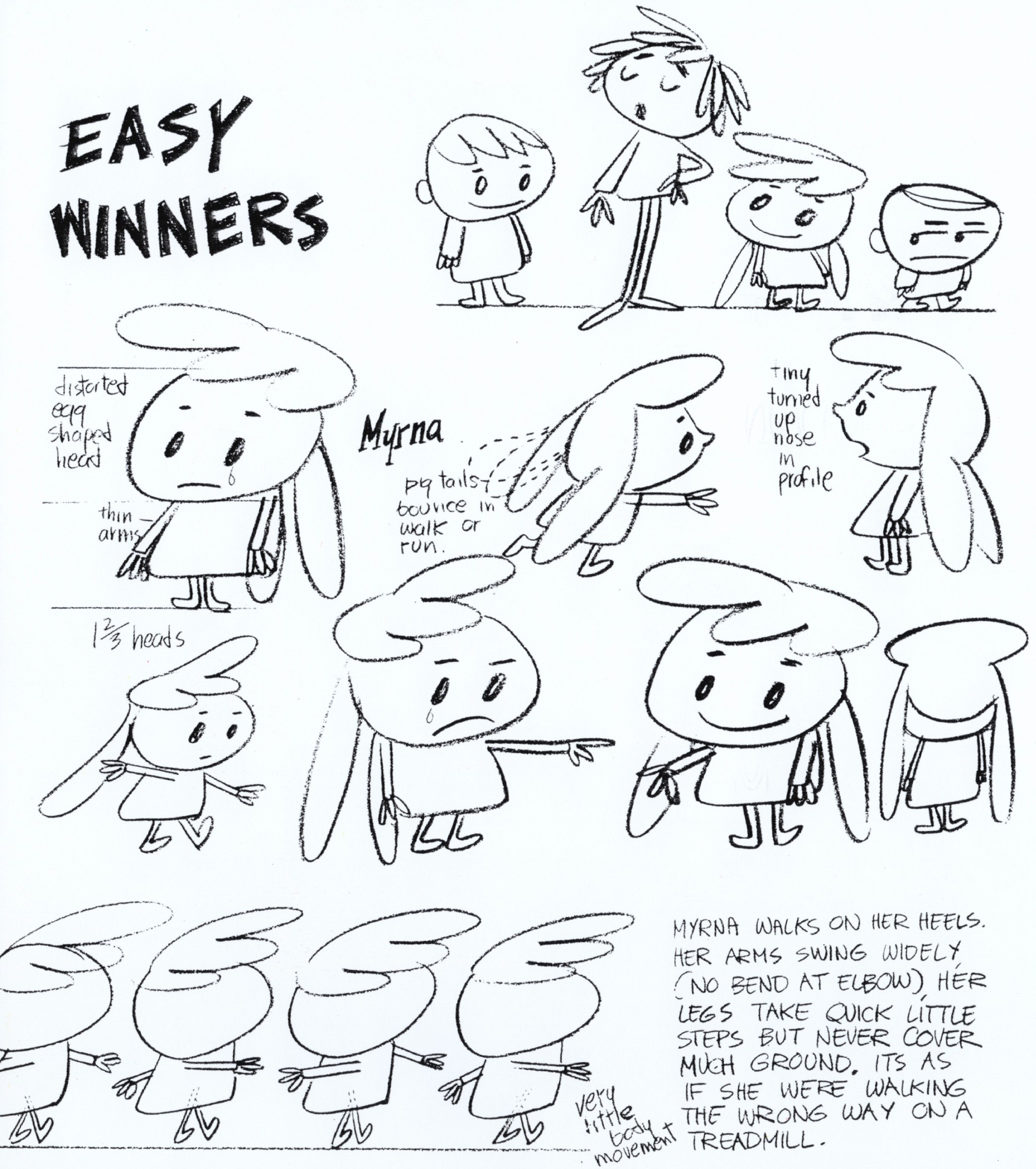
Flebus perhaps qualifies as the most uncompromisingly modern film ever produced by Terrytoons. It's an ambitious personal statement by its director-designer, Ernie Pintoff, who also scored (uncredited) the film's music. The film is rooted in the 1950s-era hipster mentality, which viewed psychiatry as the be-all, end-all solution to life's problems: Flebus, a squat man with a generously sized schnoz and ill-fitting bowler, is loved by all and is shocked to discover an individual who dislikes him. He takes pills, has nightmares, and visits a psychiatrist to find out what's the matter with him, and a resolution is reached only when the film's antagonist visits the same psychiatrist to learn why he dislikes Flebus. The cartoon looked unlike any other theatrical short of the time with its characters inked in a bold scraggly line and painted all white, set against backgrounds designed with hard-edged solid blocks of color that channel the abstractionist paintings of Josef Albers.

Pintoff, who had been recruited by Deitch from UPA, did not last long at Terrytoons. He left midway through the production of *Flebus* to start his own studio in New York City. Deitch referred to Pintoff as a "rara avis" in the Terrytoons studio: "He had little to talk about with the majority of the old guard, and pretty much kept to himself in his little director's cubicle. He always had his trumpet with him at work, and would play the blues, while waiting for inspiration."

Flebus is successful largely because the highly styled characters don't come across as a cold graphic exercise but exude warmth and humor. This can be attributed to the film's key animator, Jim Tyer (1904–1976). Tyer was a veteran animator who had been plying his trade since the days of silent animation in the 1920s. He was a renegade in every sense of the word and had been one of the few bright spots at Terrytoons in the pre-Deitch years. Tyer cast a presence that was both imposing and comical; one artist remembered Tyer at Terrytoons as such: "Two hundred and eighty pounds of him, sitting in his boxer shorts, long black socks with garters, skinny legs, chewing on a cigar stub, his bald head shining." Tyer animated straight-ahead rather than pose-to-pose, creating drawings that were wild and rambunctious and blatantly disregarding all the conventional rules of motion and of staying "on model" (drawing the character according to the proportions and construction indicated on the model sheet). He managed to vividly bring to life the characters in *Flebus* while maintaining the graphic integrity of the characters.

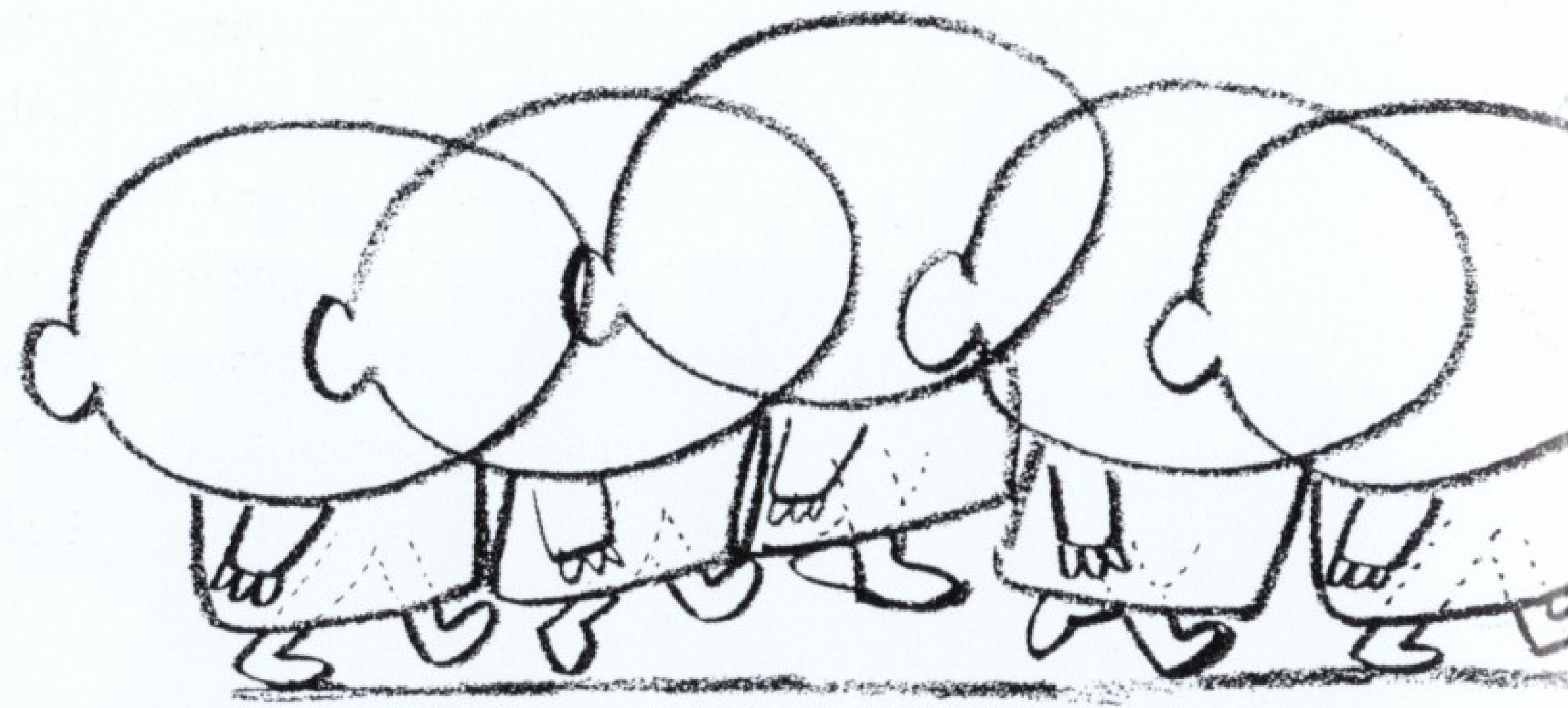


Opposite and right: ***Flebus* (1957)**
Director: Ernest Pintoff
Film stills


EASY WINNERS
distorted egg shaped head
thin arms
Myrna
pig tails bounce in walk or run.
tiny turned up nose in profile
1 2/3 heads
MYRNA WALKS ON HER HEELS. HER ARMS SWING WIDELY (NO BEND AT ELBOW) HER LEGS TAKE QUICK LITTLE STEPS BUT NEVER COVER MUCH GROUND. ITS AS IF SHE WERE WALKING THE WRONG WAY ON A TREADMILL.
very little body movement

Easy Winners

Jules Feiffer (b. 1929) served mostly as a storyman while at Terrytoons, but he also designed a proposed TV series, *Easy Winners,* for which a pilot was produced. The show was designed in Feiffer's inimitable cartooning style, made famous in his work for the *Village Voice*. Deitch had planned to shoot the animators' drawings directly, with no inking and painting, a precursor to the etchy look of Disney's *101 Dalmatians*. The project was nixed by CBS for being "too *New Yorkerish*." Shortly afterward, Deitch adapted Feiffer's story "Munro" into an independent animated short, for which he won an Oscar in 1960.


Raymond has almost a mechanical man's walk. Body remains stiff arm action is slight- Walk is a stiff legged hop.

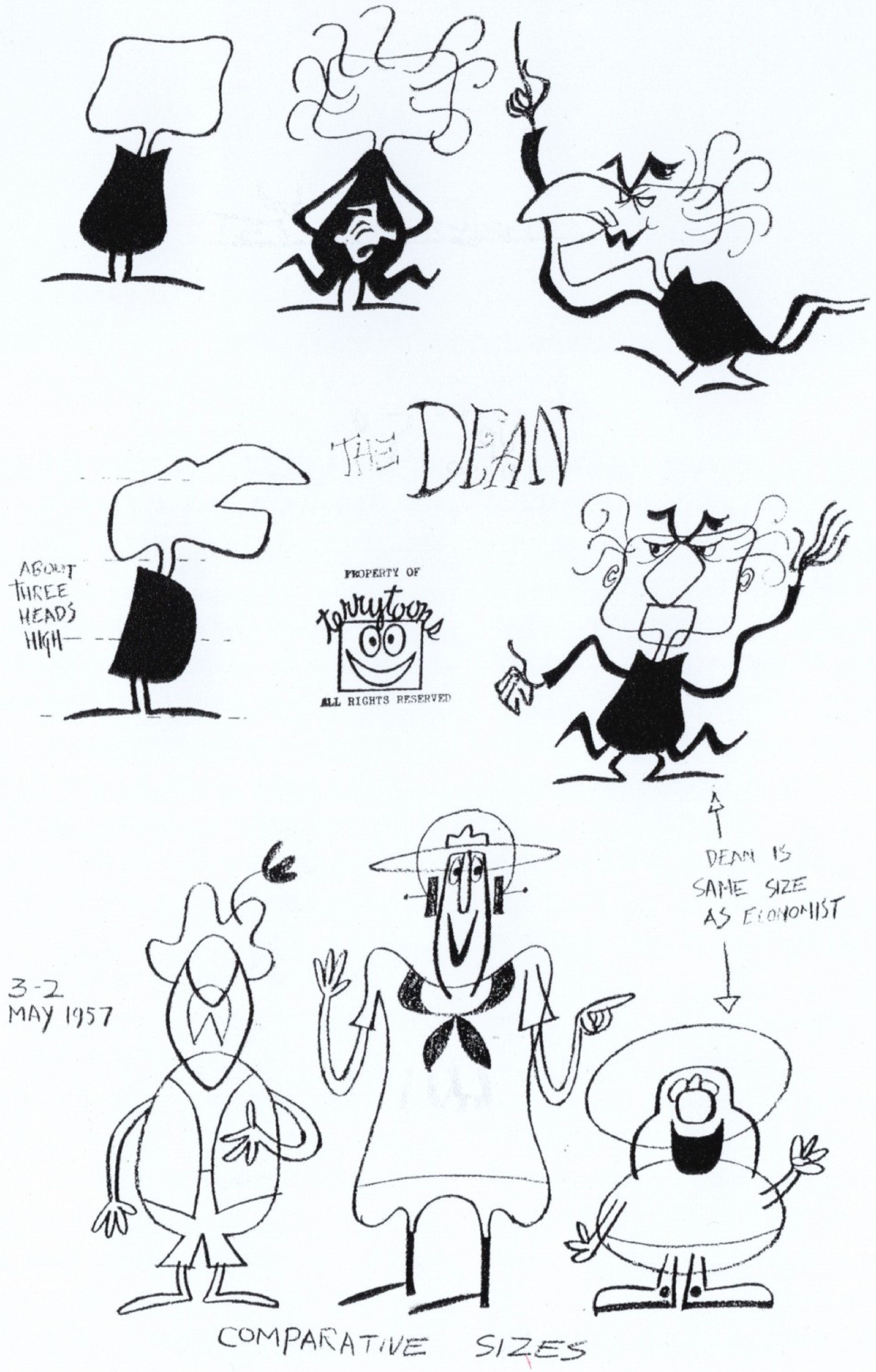
These model sheets were drawn by Jules Feiffer for the unsold television pilot *Easy Winners*.

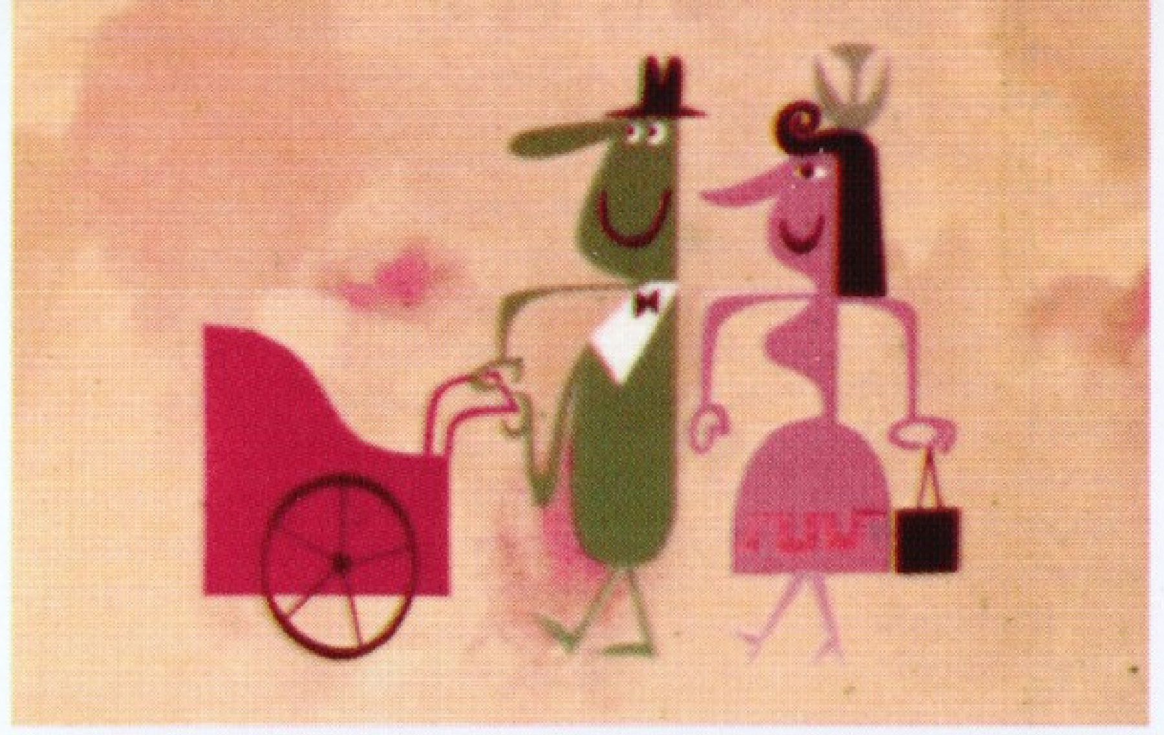
DEPTH STUDY

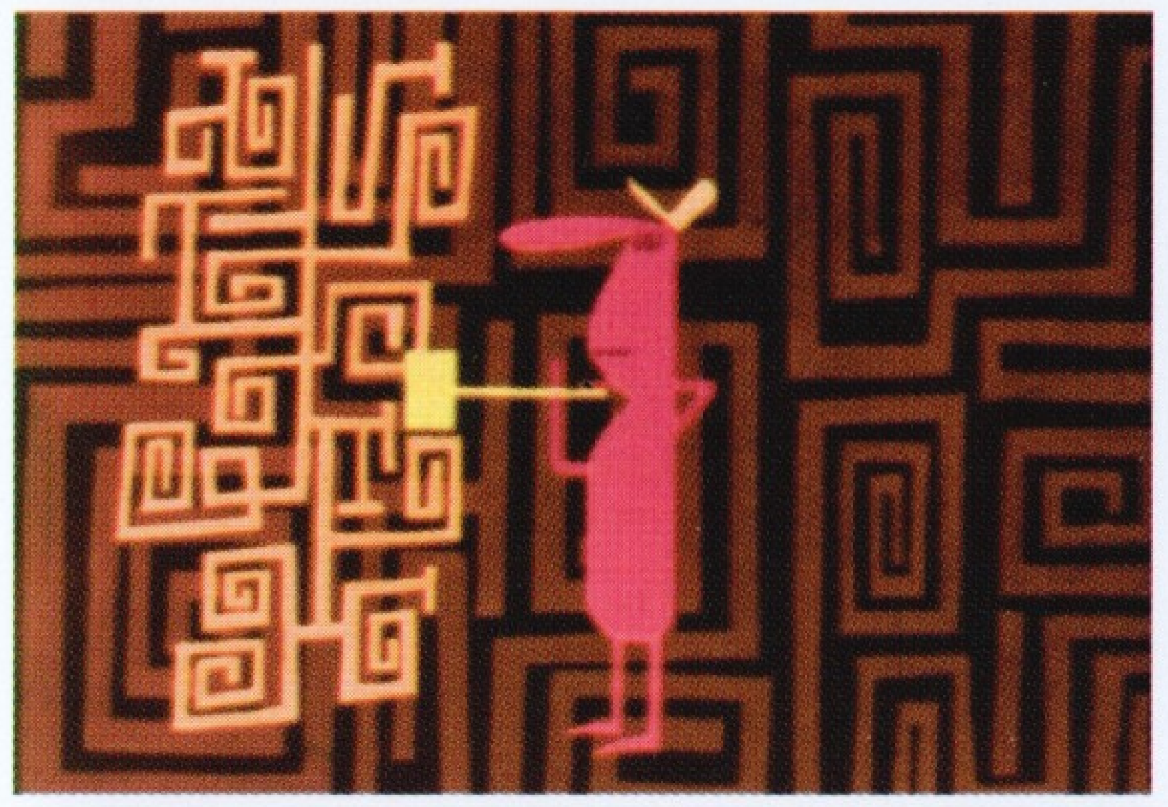
Gene Deitch feels that *Depth Study* represents "Cliff Roberts at his absolute peak of film design for me" and says it was "the most major production we undertook at Terrytoons—an attempt to produce there a genuine UPA-style animated-documentary film." The film, which examined how TV was radically altering American life and culture during the late 1950s, was a sales pitch for CBS Television, aimed at convincing corporations to purchase advertising time on CBS.

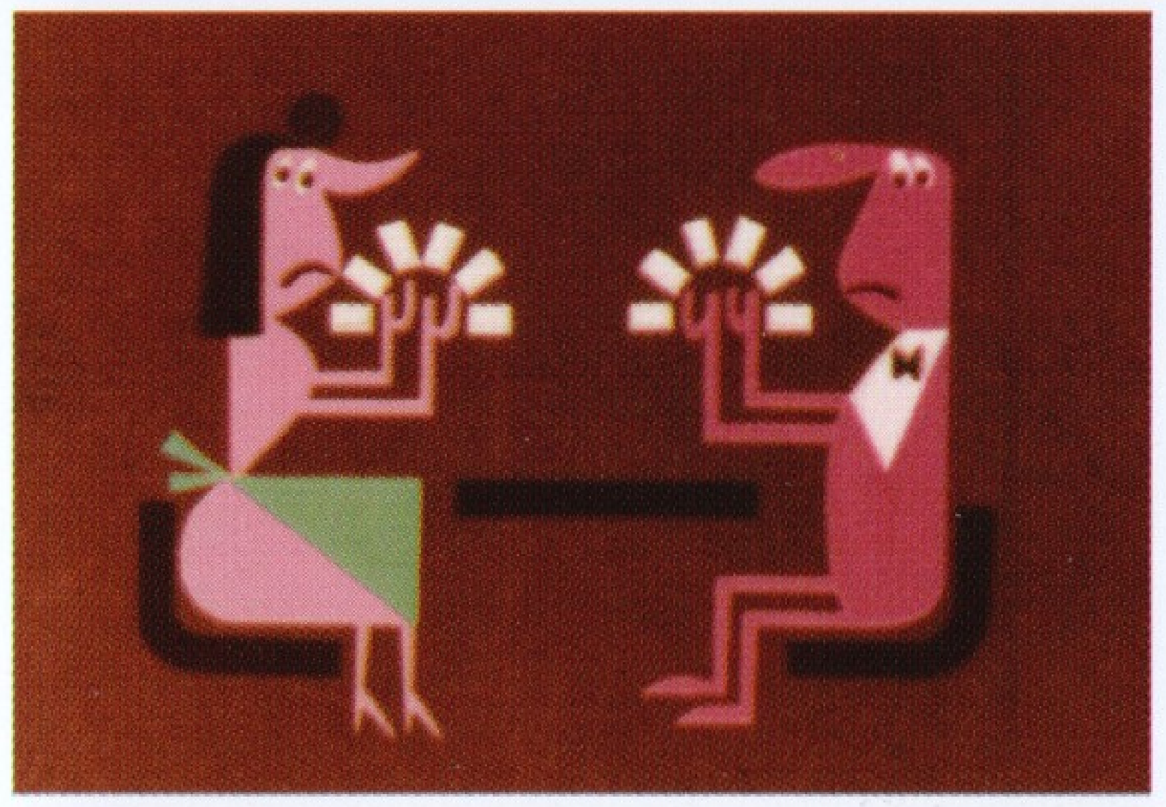
The film's director, Ray Favata (b. 1924), had been a designer at Tempo Productions, John Sutherland Productions, and Academy Pictures prior to joining Terrytoons. He recalls that pushing the studio into high-design territory presented a unique set of challenges. Once the scenes had been animated by the old-school Terry animators, the characters had lost the sophisticated shapes of Cliff Roberts's designs and morphed into the bulbous Terrytoons characters of the past. The responsibility for fixing the animation fell squarely on Favata's shoulders:

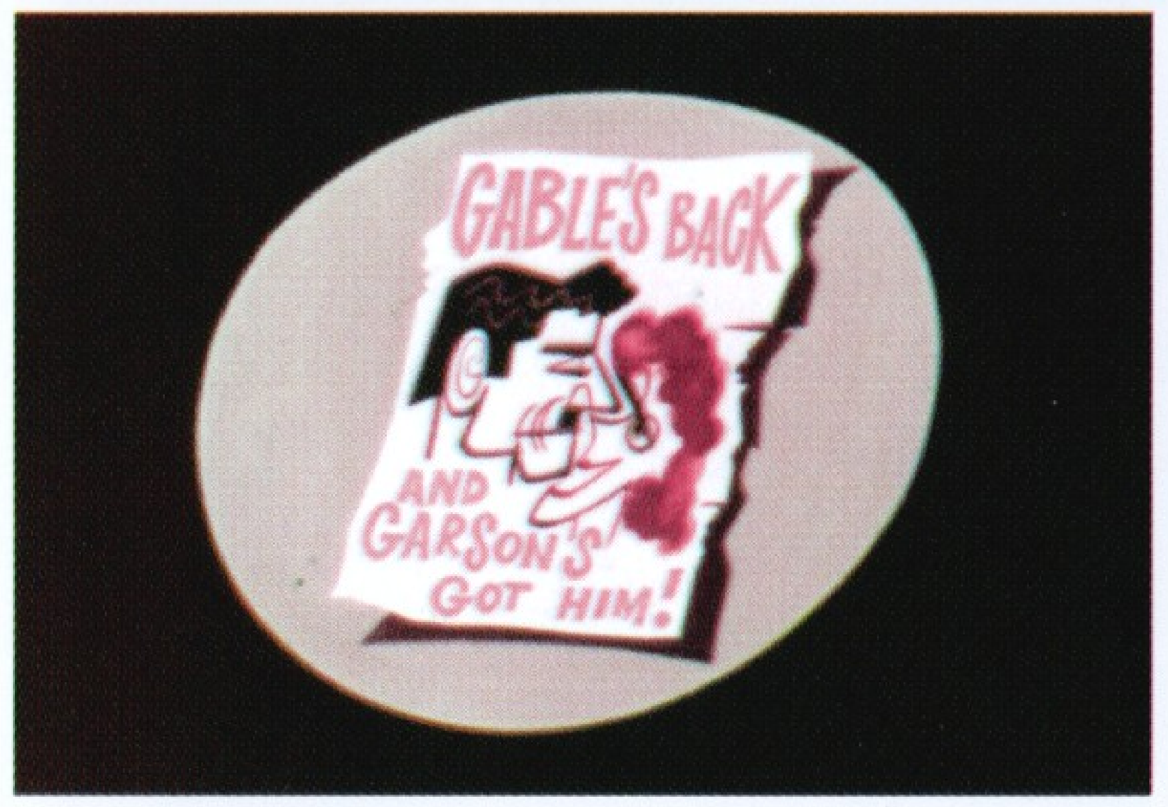
> *It was a disaster, believe me, [the animators' drawings were] a complete departure. If they had been close at all, I would have been able to go along with it, but they were crazily off the mark. I started off by taking home just one or two scenes to redraw because it was easier to redraw them than to try and salvage them. After a while, I didn't even think twice about it; I just took all the scenes home and redrew them.*

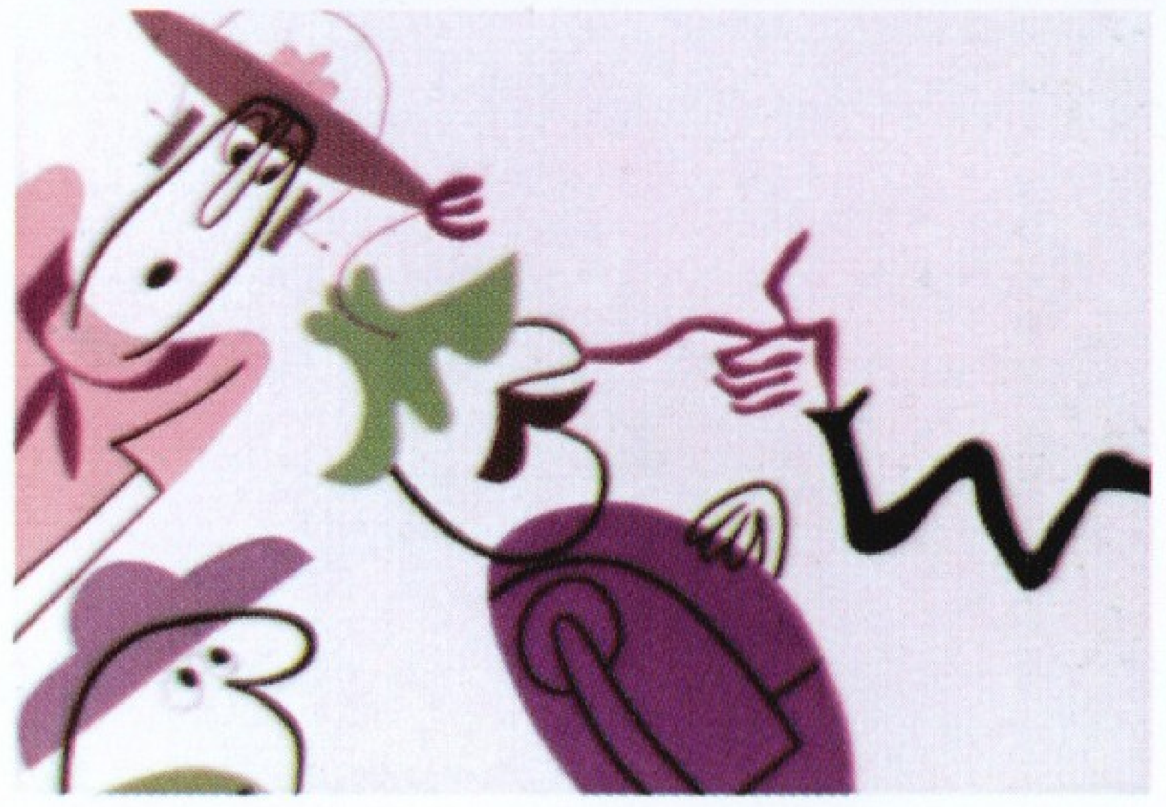


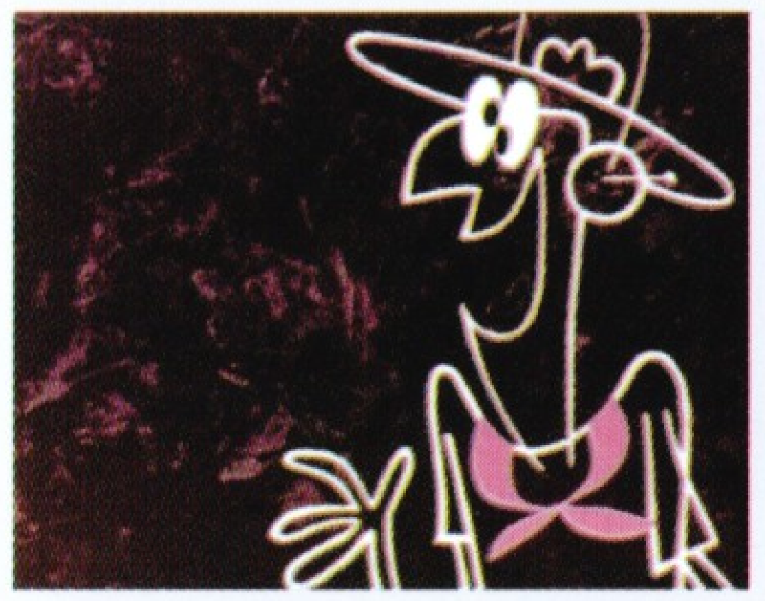


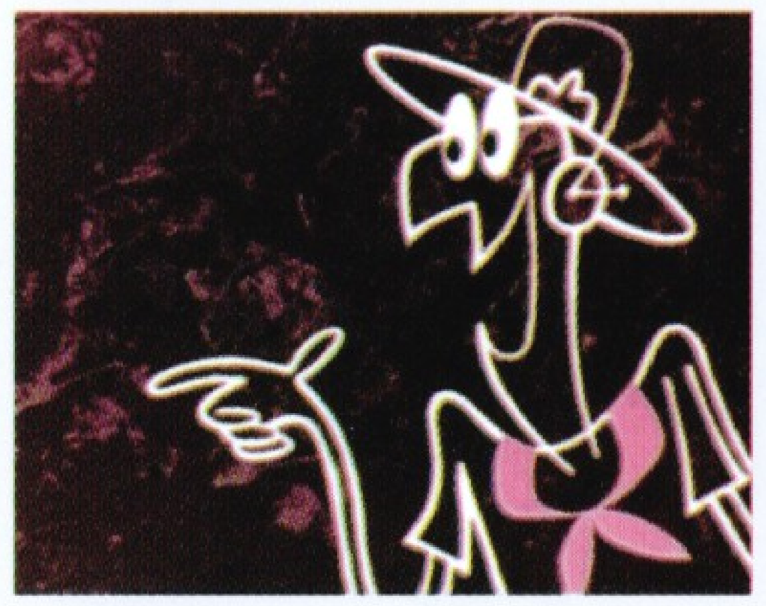


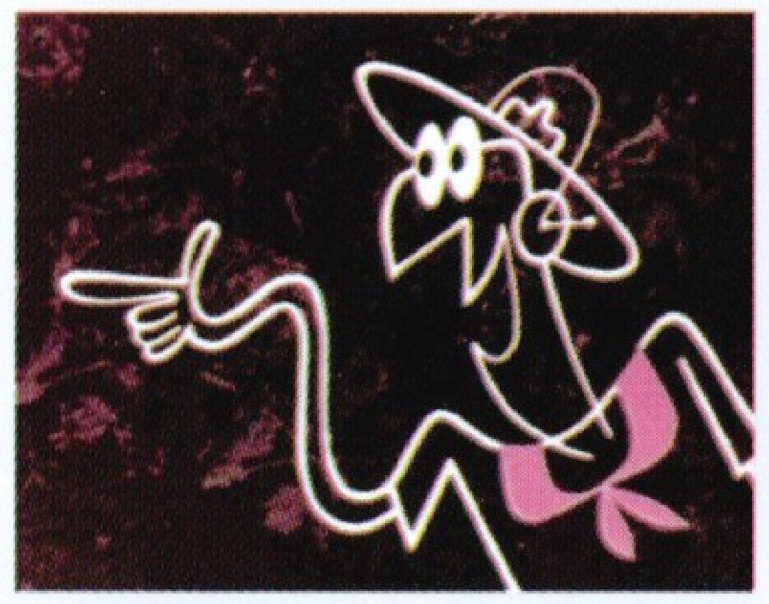












***DEPTH STUDY* (1957)**
Director: Ray Favata
Above left: Model sheet by Cliff Roberts
Above right and bottom: Film stills

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UNITED PRODUCTIONS OF AMERICA

UPA

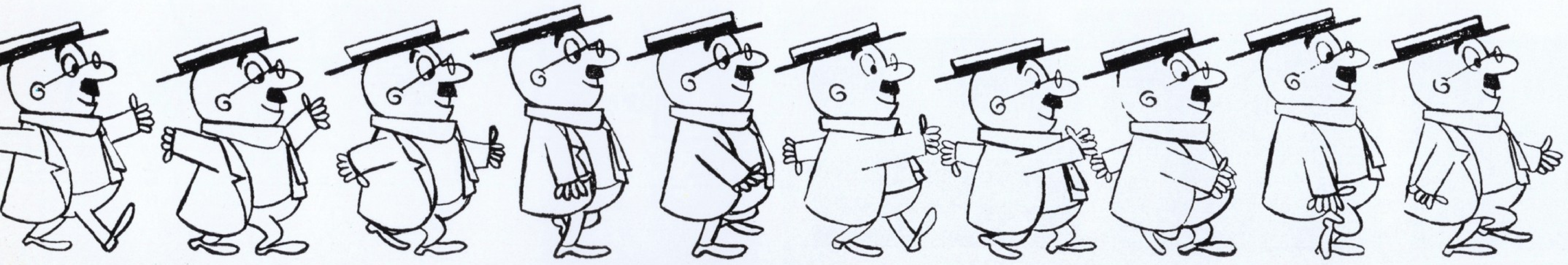
A discussion of 1950s animation design without mention of United Productions of America (familiarly known as UPA) would be like a discussion of great film comedians without mention of Chaplin and Keaton. UPA formed the foundation of the design movement in 1950s animation, and in the words of historian Michael Barrier, the studio was, "in the early fifties, exactly what the Disney studio had been in the thirties: the reference point, the studio with which every other studio automatically compared its cartoons, whether or not a given studio was trying to emulate the UPA films." UPA's far-reaching impact on the industry stems from the fact that it didn't propose a specific "UPA style" or a formula for others to follow. Rather, UPA championed the contemporary graphic language of the era and encouraged its adaptation to the animated medium. UPA promoted the idea of animation as a visual medium capable of being used for personal expression, and it revolutionized the field by proving that animation need not be restricted to the graphic clichés of mass-produced Hollywood animation. Catherine Sullivan encapsulated the UPA philosophy in *American Artist* when she described the studio's style as "a way of seeing, an attitude, a feeling that each story idea deserves its own most effective expression in terms of visual treatment, sound, music, or whatever is required."

UPA designer and director Bill Hurtz felt that the studio's success resulted from the artists' belief that style stemmed from the film's subject matter. "That sort of followed the precepts of modern architecture at the time, 'form follows function,'" Hurtz said. "It was a marvelously liberating notion that you were not tied to your particular desire for flat shapes or silhouettes or this kind of color or that kind of line divorcement or off-register line and shape, or anything like that. Those only became means." One of UPA's original founders, Zach Schwartz, offered a slightly different perspective—he felt that there was a particular mentality that permeated among the studio's artists:

> *Our efforts at UPA really grew out of this appreciation of the fact that our work was closer to the work of the graphic artist than it was to [the work of] the motion picture director. . . . It was really a graphic medium. It had all of the possibilities of graphic art that could take off and go in any direction at all. It did not have to be tied to what a motion picture camera could shoot.*

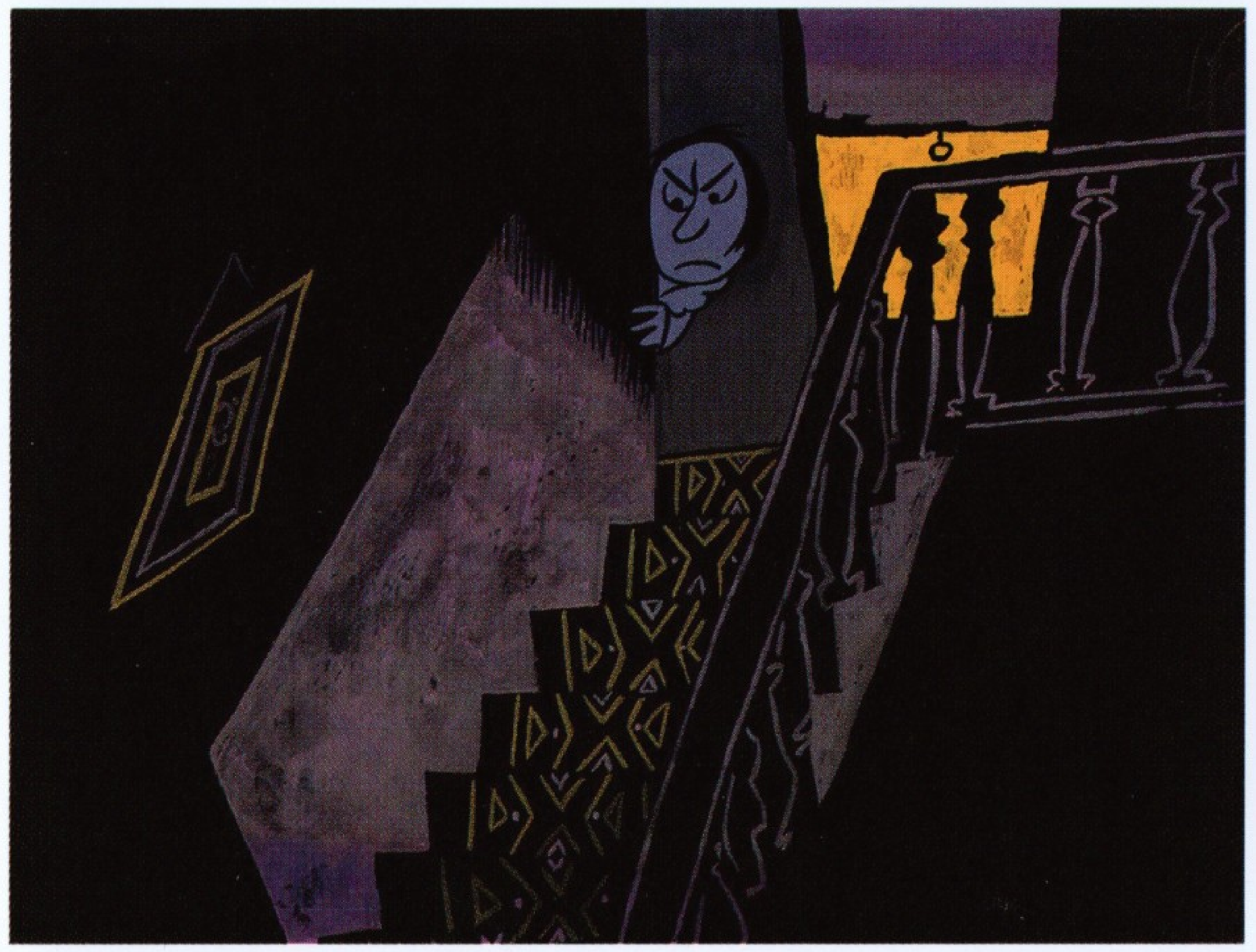
There are enough consistencies in the UPA output to constitute a filmmaking idiom, if not a specific style of drawing. The artists preferred human characters over animals, satire over slapstick (the studio's disdainful term for violent humor was "hurt gags"), abstract and suggestive art over literal and representational, and a general commitment to being contemporary. UPA reaped the rewards of its progressive approach to animation with a nearly unprecedented amount of critical acclaim during the early and mid-1950s. Film and cultural critics like Arthur Knight, Bosley Crowther, and Gilbert Seldes, who, prior to UPA, often grudgingly acknowledged the animation medium, now couldn't stop singing the praises of the studio's graphic inventiveness. Publications were compelled to write story after story about the studio, and UPA appeared in every conceivable print rag, from *Arts & Architecture* to *Theater Arts*, *Catholic World* to *Graphis*, *Harper's Bazaar* to *Holiday*, and *Life* to *Look*. In 1955, UPA achieved the ultimate recognition for its artistry when it was honored with an exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

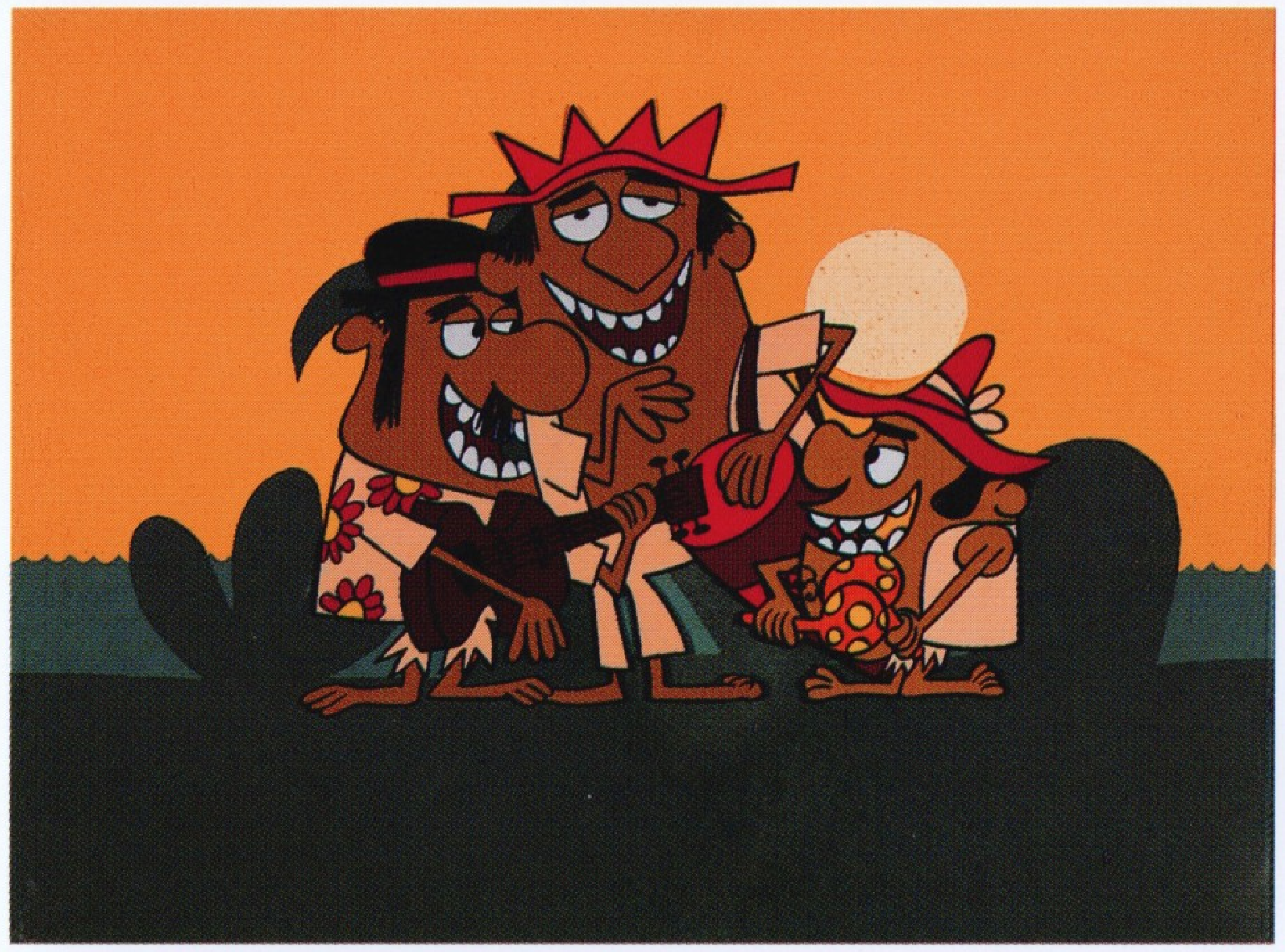
The scope of UPA's accomplishments is spread out over a far broader field than is typically acknowledged in histories of the studio. The primary focus tends to be on the ninety or so theatrical shorts that UPA



Above: UPA logo, designed by Alvin Lustig.

Left: ***The Jaywalker* (1956)**
Director: Bobe Cannon
Animation walk cycle





produced for Columbia Pictures in the 1950s, but UPA's history also includes dozens of training and industrial films, hundreds of TV commercials, seventy-five shorts for *The Boing Boing Show,* a feature film, and numerous other bits and pieces, such as the animated inserts for the live-action feature *The Four Poster.* Understanding UPA's profound effect on animation design requires an examination of all these varied productions.

UPA IN THE 1940s

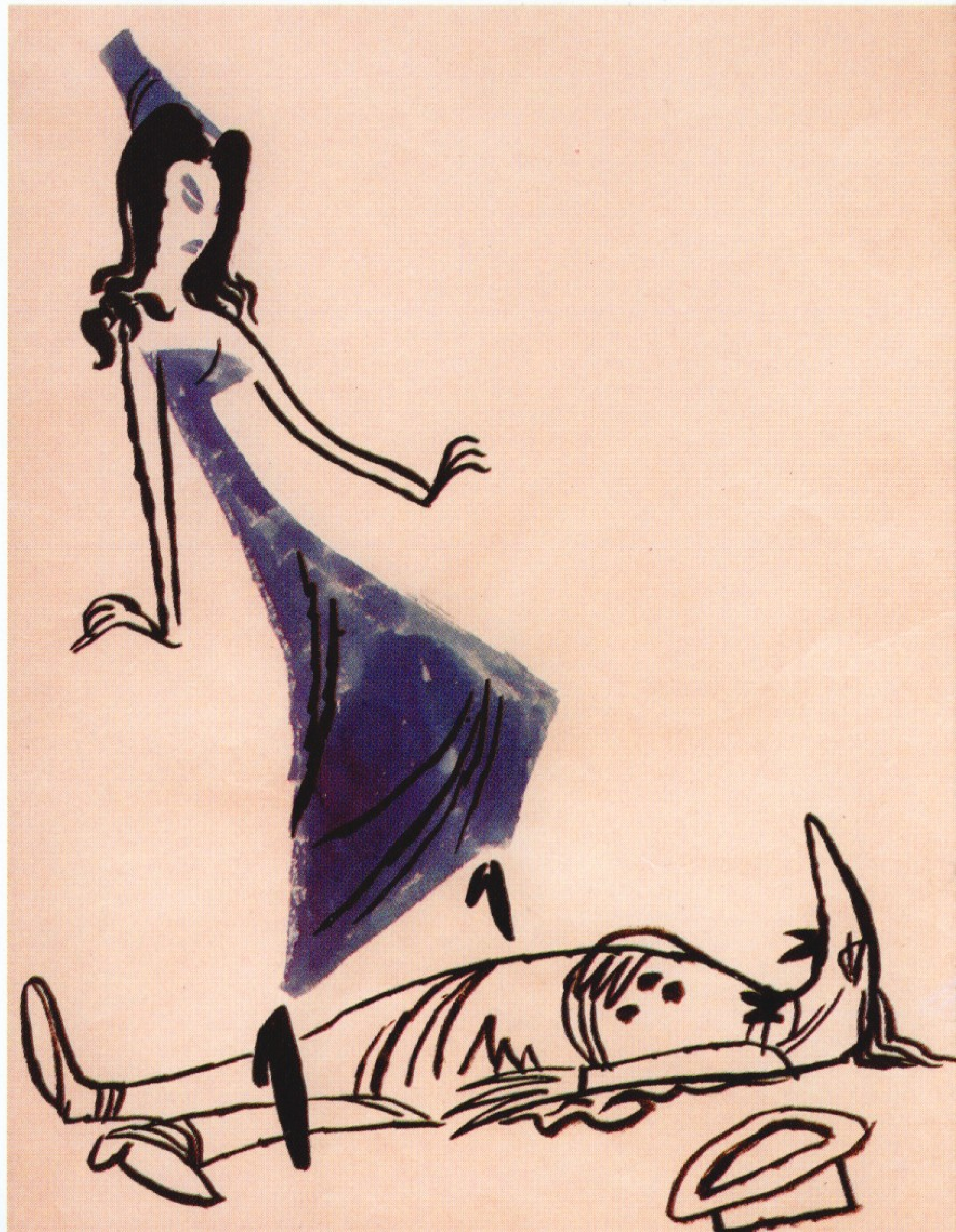
UPA's beginnings have been well documented elsewhere, notably in Michael Barrier's *Hollywood Cartoons: American Animation in Its Golden Age.* The studio was founded in 1943 under modest circumstances. Stephen Bosustow (1911–1981), a former animation artist at Disney, Iwerks, and Universal, was teaching an industrial sketching class at the California Institute of Technology when one of his students approached him with the offer of producing a slide film that would teach welding safety to shipyard workers. Bosustow accepted and partnered with two former Disney colleagues—layout artists-designers David Hilberman (b. 1911) and Zach Schwartz (1912–2003)—who had recently rented a small room in a downtown Hollywood office building to use as a painting studio. The trio—Schwartz and Hilberman as artists, Bosustow as businessman—quickly completed the filmstrip, titled *Sparks and Chips Get the Blitz,* and by the end of 1943 had formed Industrial Film and Poster Service in pursuit of more ambitious projects.

They accepted their first major assignment in early 1944—the production of *Hell-Bent for Election,* a fully animated short commissioned by the United Auto Workers in support of Roosevelt's presidential re-election bid. The film was art directed by Zach Schwartz and directed by Chuck Jones (moonlighting from his day job as a director at Warner Bros.). Though more streamlined than the average animated short of the time, *Hell-Bent* remains rooted in the graphic conventions of Hollywood animation with its carefully rendered backgrounds, full animation, and volumetric character design. Some of UPA's other early projects, however, took greater liberties with design.

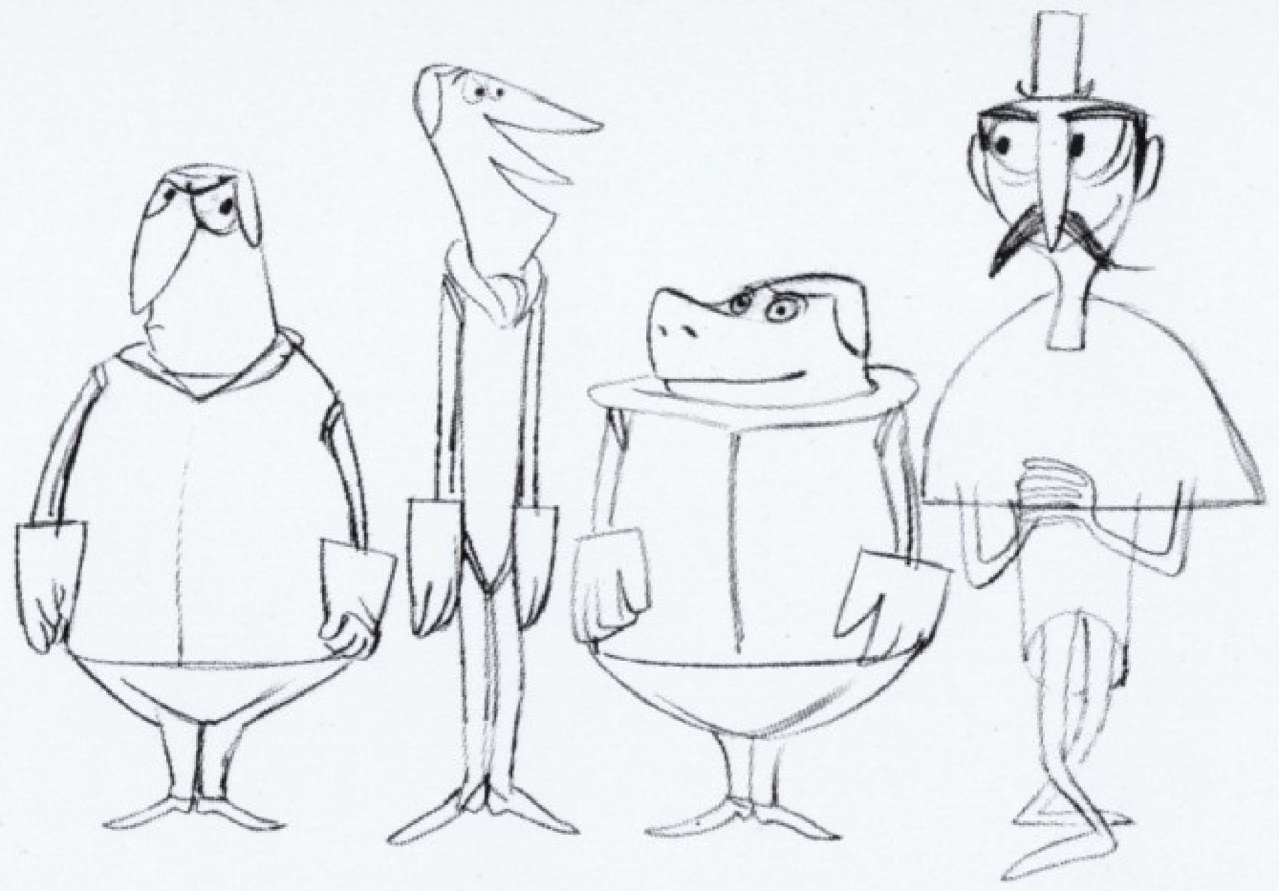
In *A Few Quick Facts About Fear,* produced for the U.S. Army, Schwartz cut out horses from black paper to achieve a severe silhouette effect inspired by Greek vases. It was an example of UPA moving toward a freer graphic expression of character and away from the Disney preoccupation with roundness of form and literal anatomy. Another significant early project was a commission from the U.S. Navy to produce sixteen animated shorts about flight safety. The series, produced between 1945 and 1947, was primarily directed and designed by John Hubley, with additional design and direction by Zach Schwartz and Bill Hurtz, backgrounds by Paul Julian, and story work

Above left: ***A Unicorn in the Garden* (1953)**
Director: Bill Hurtz
Production cel and background

Above right: ***Trees and Jamaica Daddy* (1958)**
Directors: Lew Keller and Fred Crippen
Production cel and background



***Rooty Toot Toot* (1952)**
Director: John Hubley
Character concept by Hubley



titles as *Bailing Out, Collisions with the Earth, Join-Up Collisions, Landing Accidents*, and *Marginal Weather Accidents*. Among the most famous of the "Flight Safety" films is *Flat Hatting*, which warned aviators of the consequences of "flat-hatting," or buzzing the ground too low with their planes. Hubley conceived the film as "an animated lithograph," and the film has richly designed black-and-white backgrounds blended with clever character animation cycles. There is a highly evolved use of match cuts, in which eight scenes are linked together by a constantly metamorphosing animation element—a plane morphs into an axe, then a book, a mouse, and so on. In another part of *Flat Hatting*, when the pilot is flying through San Francisco, a dramatic use of space is achieved through dynamic cutting and camera moves. A popular misconception about the UPA films is that because their backgrounds were stylized and patterned they were also flat, but in so many of the best UPA films, there was considerable effort invested to convey a sense of deep space, as exemplified in *Flat Hatting*.

In another "Flight Safety" film, *Idling Mixture Check*, Hubley designed characters who were heavily influenced by the work of cartoonist Robert Osborn. Osborn had illustrated the series of U.S. Navy pamphlets on which the series was based. According to Bill Hurtz, Hubley felt that utilizing the style of Osborn "was one of the ways towards freer and more contemporary characters." For *Inside Morgan's Head*, Hubley shed all references to contemporary cartoonists and concocted a highly organic, fluid cartooning style. There was a strong spirit of innovation in these early U.S. Navy films. Zach Schwartz remembers an incident he encountered on a film called *Fuel*:

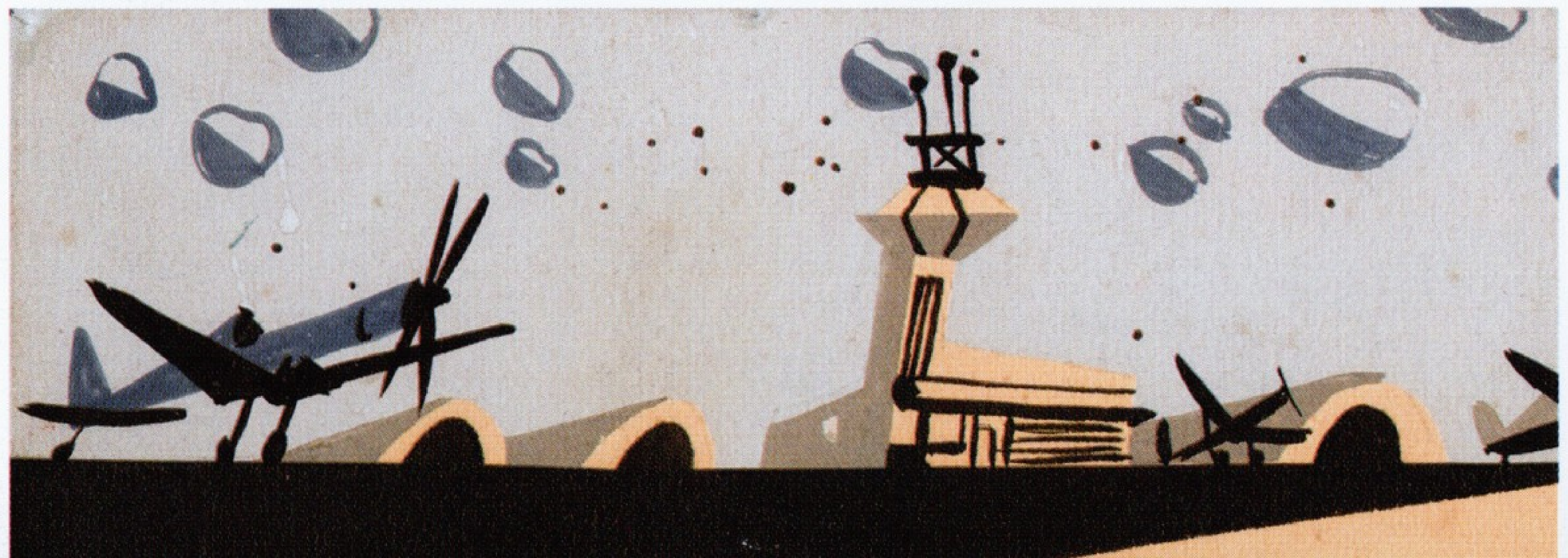
> *[There] was a character who had to move from one part of the plane to another. We knew we couldn't afford to animate him around that thing, and we didn't have the time to do it. Ade [Woolery] said, 'Why don't you just dissolve him from here to there?' It was the first time anybody had ever done anything like that. It was such a simple solution, and it worked like a charm. It was that kind of thing that went on all the time. . . . No one was stuck in a box.*

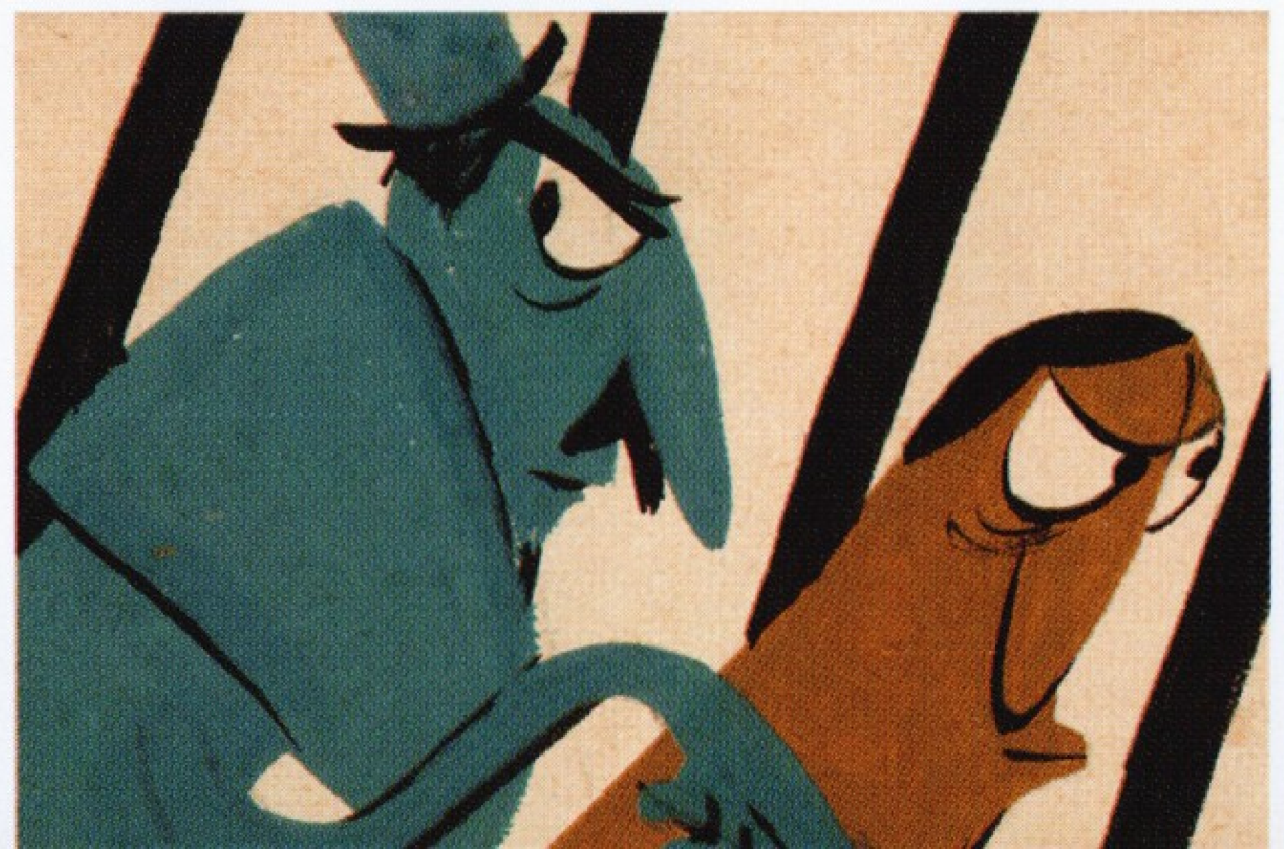
The early experiments of the UPA crew had become part of the studio's accepted modern filmmaking vocabulary by the 1950s. A decade after *Fuel*, when Fred Crippen was animating shorts for UPA's TV series *The Boing Boing Show*, he'd freely "pop" characters from one side of the screen to the other. Another key element of the early UPA films that carried over into the studio's later work was its stylized use of color to suggest mood and emotion. Color was used evocatively at UPA in the modern tradition of Matisse, Klee, and Miró, with little concern for naturalism. The studio's main colorists during the 1940s were Herb Klynn (1917–1999) and Jules Engel (1909– 2003), both of whom fastidiously made thumbnail paintings to plot out the color continuity of the films. They insisted on doing continuity paintings even for short theatrical commercials, such as in a series of Spanish-language commercials produced for Procter & Gamble in the late 1940s. In one of the "Flight Safety" films called *Rover Boys*, they created a comprehensive color board in which characters were keyed in fantastic greens and browns and skies were vibrant pink.

In 1946, UPA produced another one of its seminal early works—*Brotherhood of Man*, a film that advocated racial equality. Commissioned by the United Auto Workers, the film was directed by Bobe Cannon but owes a greater graphic debt to its designer, John Hubley, and background stylist Paul Julian. *Brotherhood of Man* was based on a 1943 pamphlet entitled *The Races of Mankind*, illustrated by Modernist painter Ad Reinhardt, and it was Reinhardt's drawings, mixed in with a liberal dose of *New Yorker* cartoonist Saul Steinberg's, that provided the foundation for Hubley's fresh linear designs. The characters were brought to life against Julian's backgrounds, which were loosely suggestive with playful perspectives, unnatural colors, and a heavy use of line.

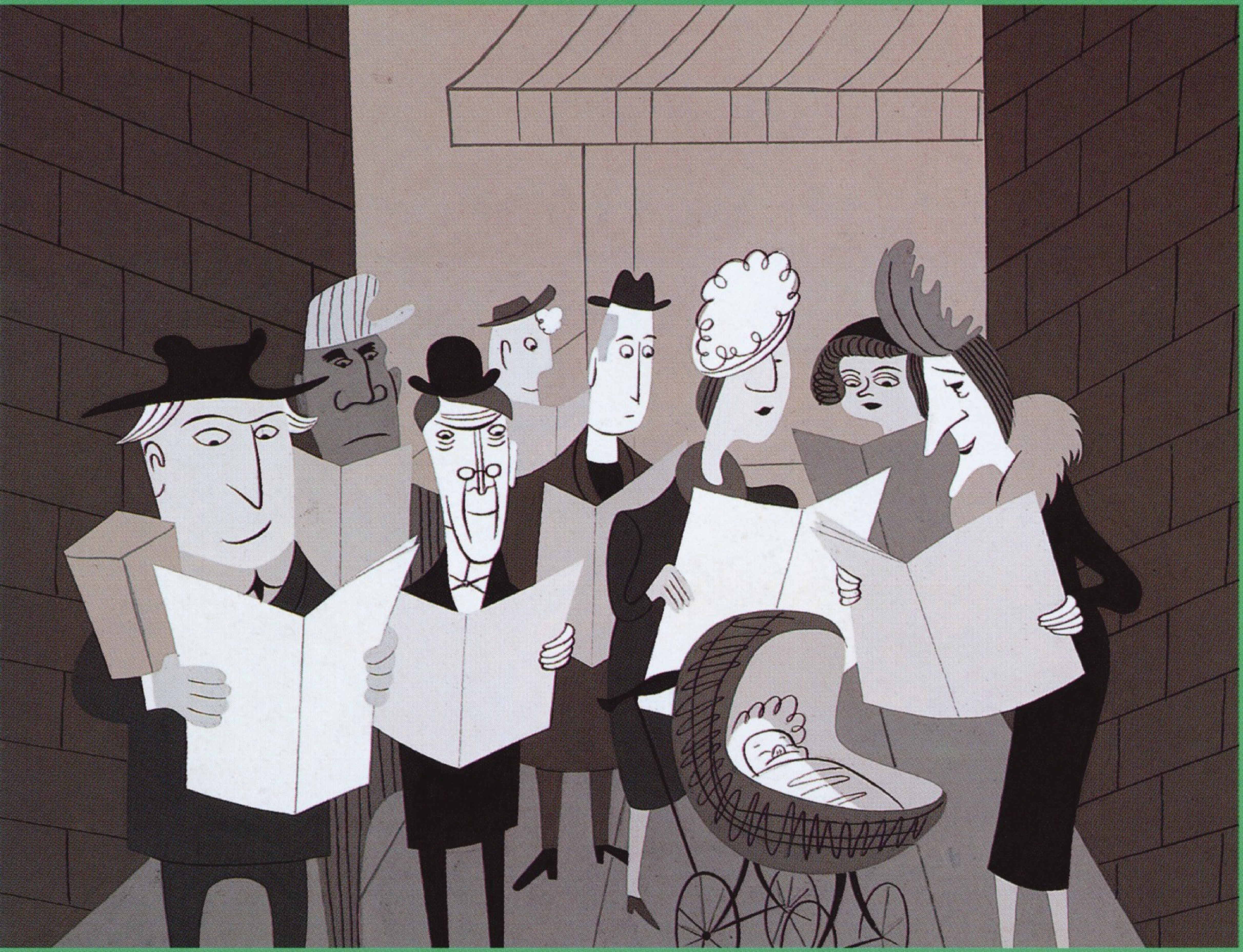
At the beginning of 1946, the studio changed its name to United Productions of America, but the more significant change that year came in July, when Bosustow bought out his two partners, Hilberman and Schwartz. (Hilberman and Schwartz subsequently moved to New York and opened Zac-David Productions. Schwartz and Hilberman split soon afterward, and Hilberman partnered with Bill Pomerance, renaming the studio Tempo Productions. By the early 1950s, Tempo had become one of New York's busiest TV commercial outfits.) Bosustow, now with sole control of the studio, made John Hubley the creative head of UPA. Hubley had been involved with most of the studio's major projects up to that point, and Bosustow felt strongly that "he was the most talented guy in the studio."

Opposite: ***Flat Hatting* (1946)**
Director: John Hubley
Production cel and
background



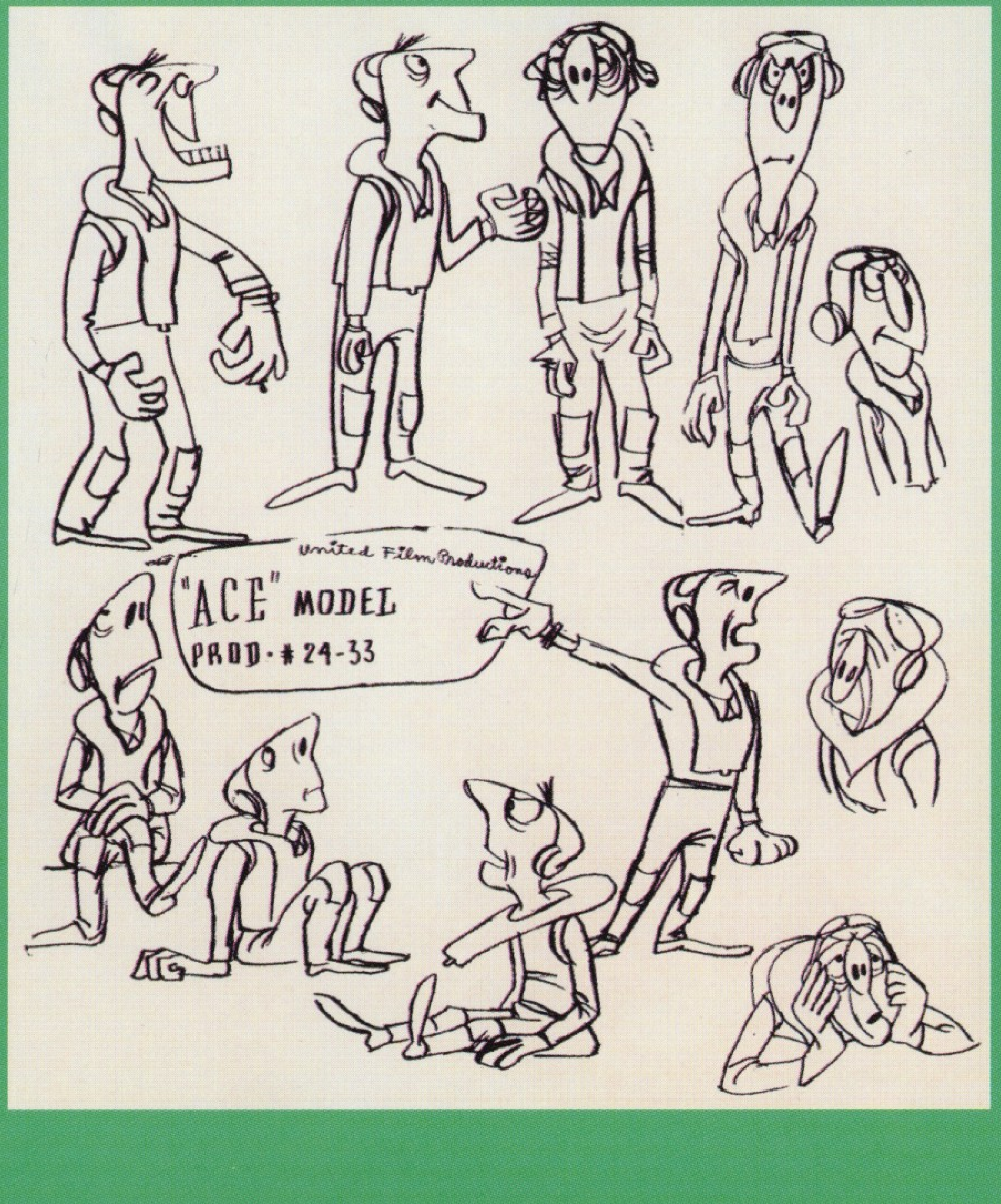


***Rover Boys* (c. 1945)**
Director: John Hubley
Left: Color keys by Herb Klynn
and Jules Engel
Above: Model sheet
drawing by Hubley

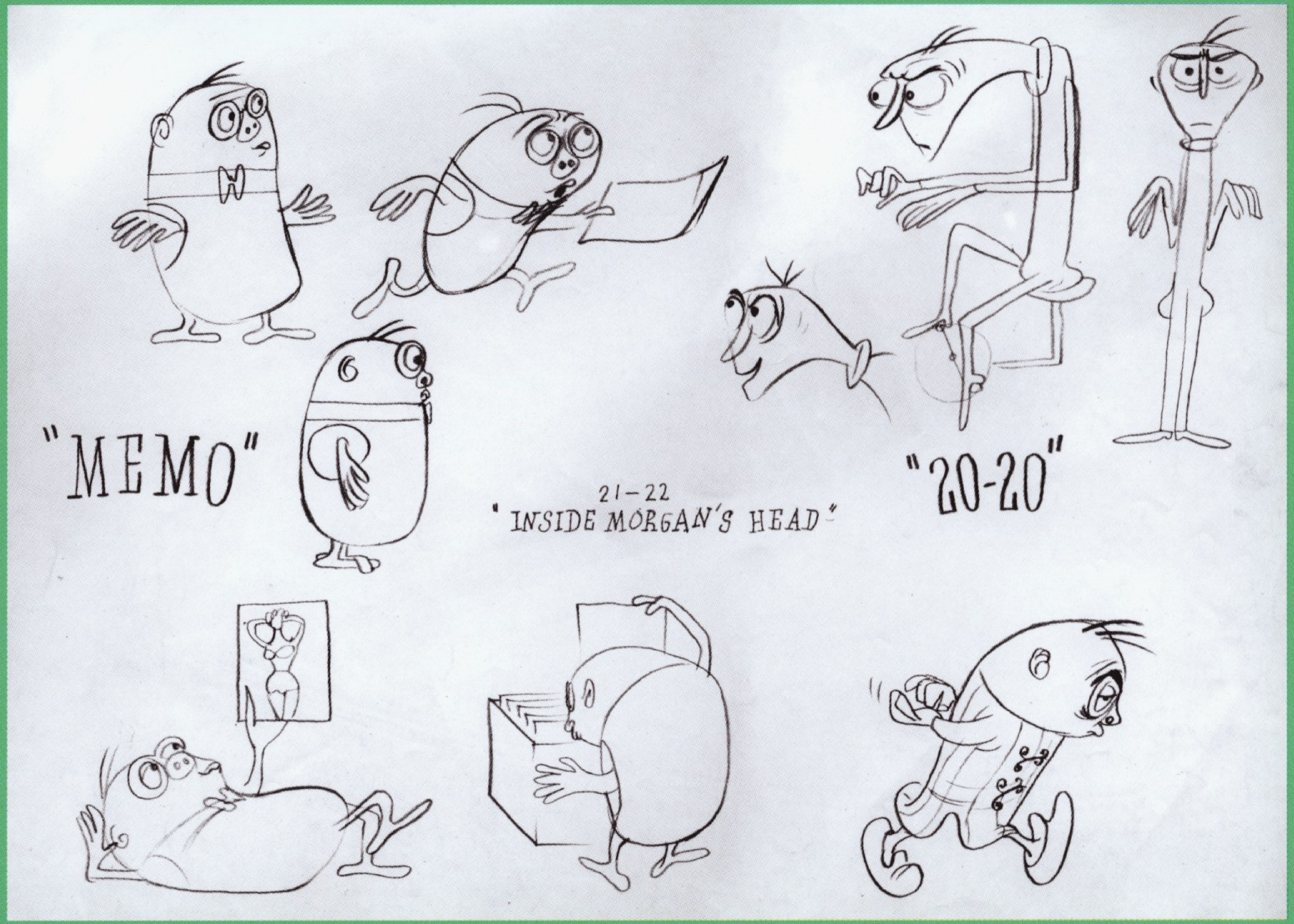


Public Opinion Polls (1947)
Director: John Hubley
Background painting based
on design by Bill Hurtz

Public Opinion Polls was one of three films that UPA produced for the U.S. State Department.


United Film Productions
"ACE" MODEL
PROD. # 24-33

Idling Mixture Check (c. 1946)
Director: John Hubley
Model sheet by Hubley


"MEMO"
21-22
"INSIDE MORGAN'S HEAD"
"20-20"

Inside Morgan's Head (c. 1945)
Director: John Hubley
Model sheet by Hubley

Late 1940s and Columbia Deal

Until 1947, UPA's primary clients had been government agencies such as the U.S. Army and Navy, the State Department, and Office of War Information, but the post–World War II recession combined with increased government scrutiny of UPA's Left-leaning employees led to a dramatic decrease in educational-and training-film assignments. UPA had to quickly find other outlets for its unique brand of filmmaking. In early 1948, Bosustow negotiated a deal to produce theatrical shorts for Columbia, which had recently shuttered its in-house cartoon division. The ideas that the UPA artists had been exploring in their training films and commercial projects could now be applied to regularly released entertainment shorts aimed at the broader American public. UPA's first few theatrical cartoons featured Columbia's stock characters the Fox and Crow, but the artists soon persuaded Columbia to allow them the opportunity to create their own characters.

As the studio underwent expansion at the end of the decade, it made a concerted effort to project a modern image to the public. In 1946, UPA hired famed West Coast designer Alvin Lustig to design its logo—three oval circles (in the primary colors, blue, yellow, and red) with the letters *U, P,* and *A* elegantly fitted into them. In 1948, Modernist architect John Lautner, a Frank Lloyd Wright disciple who had studied at Taliesen West, designed UPA's new studio in Burbank. It was an inviting, comfy ranch-style building located almost directly across the street from the sprawling Warner Bros. lot. "The striking design had high roofs vaulted with corrugated metal," recalled director John Whitney, "and the rooms were laid out along several corridors around a courtyard, so that every office, inside and outside, had a glass wall looking out on trees and flowers—some even had a country-club view." Designer T. (Thornton) Hee paints an idyllic and carefree picture of life at the studio, a freedom that is reflected graphically in the studio's films: "There were lots of birds flying around, and we'd have our lunches out on the patio, and have music out there, with people bringing their instruments. There was a camaraderie. For lunch people would bring costumes, and we'd dance out there on the grass; everybody had a wonderful time."

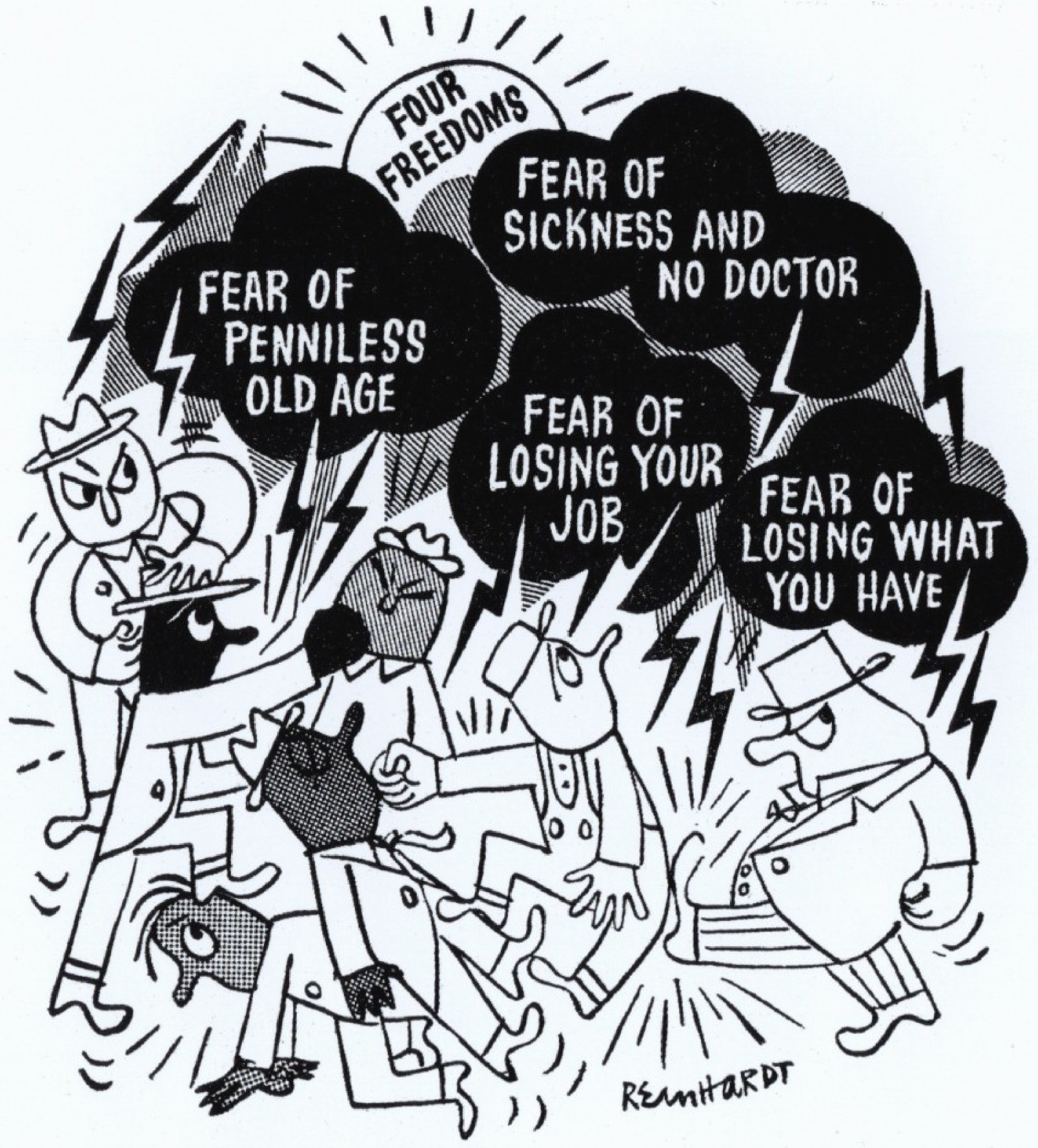
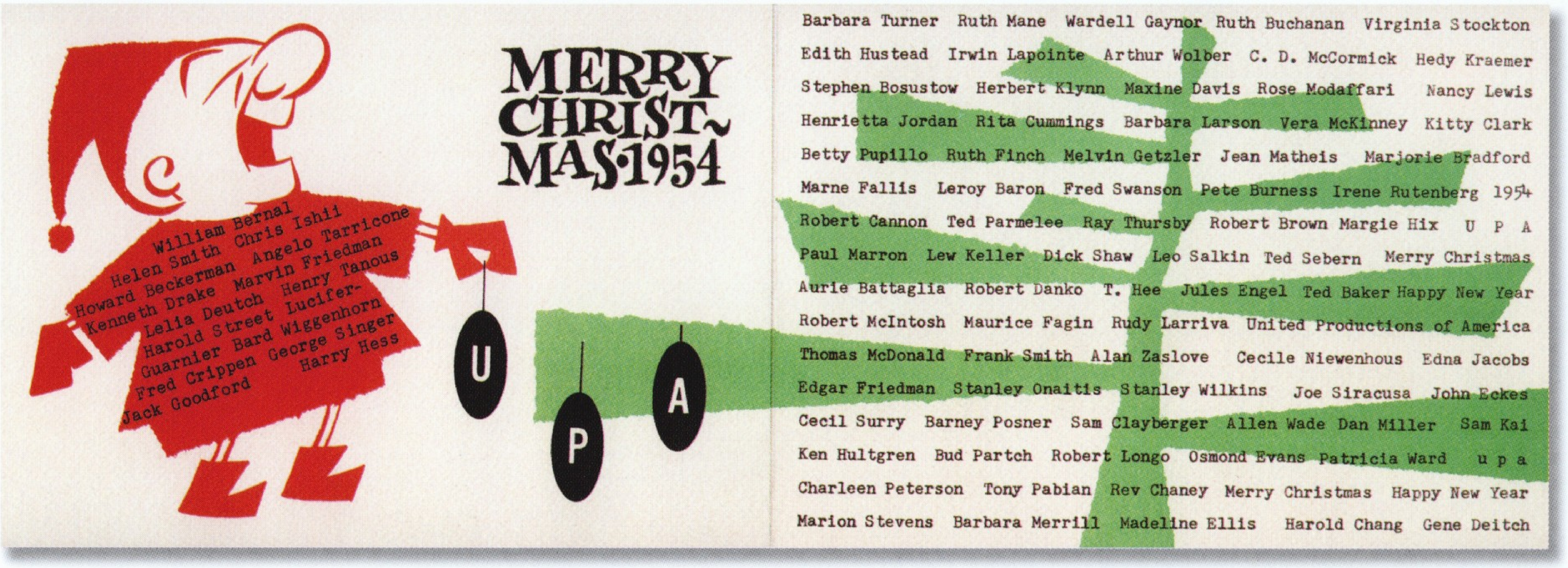
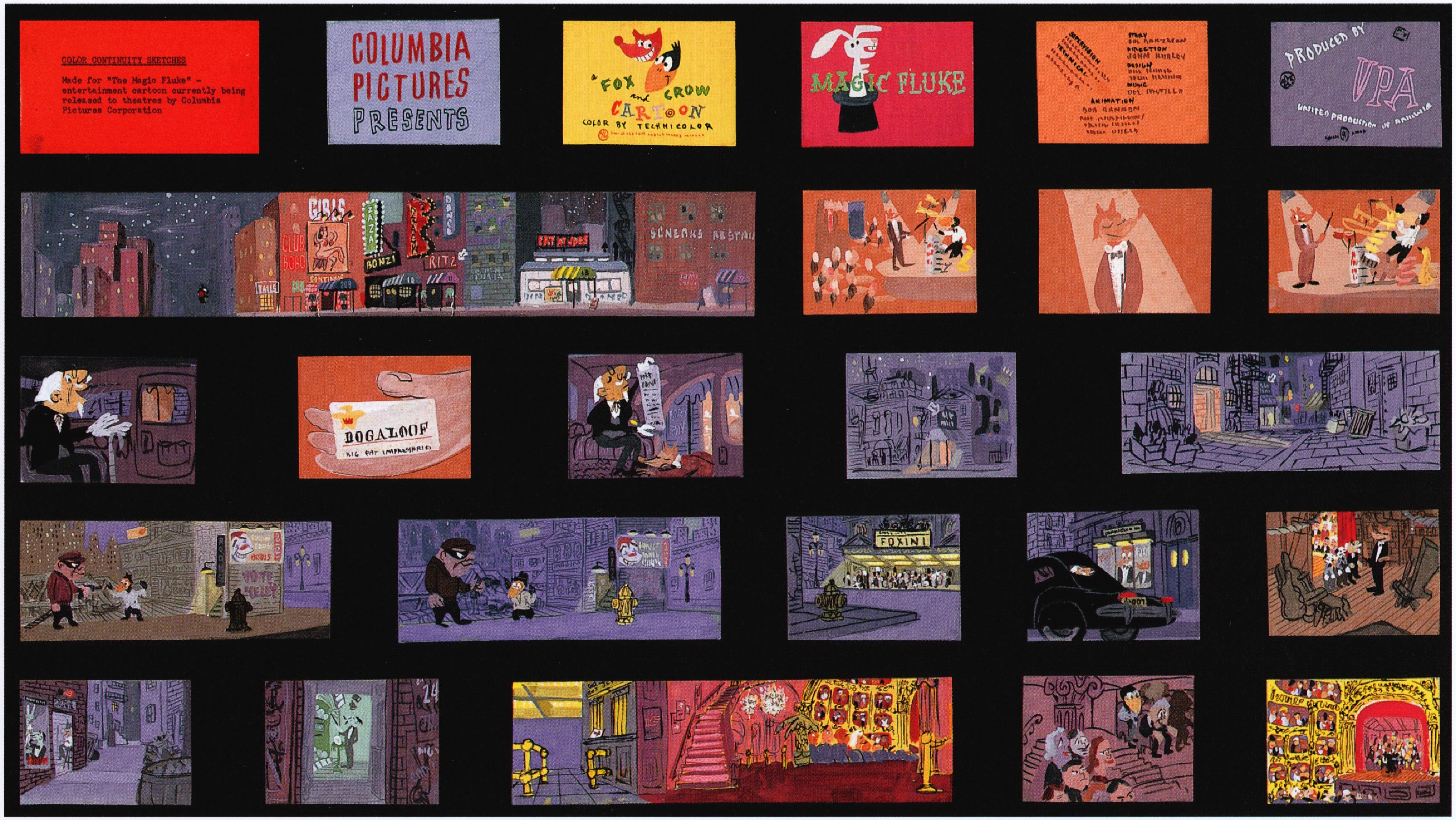

FOUR FREEDOMS
FEAR OF SICKNESS AND NO DOCTOR
FEAR OF PENNILESS OLD AGE
FEAR OF LOSING YOUR JOB
FEAR OF LOSING WHAT YOU HAVE
REINHARDT

Illustration by Ad Reinhardt from the 1943 pamphlet *The Races of Mankind,* upon which the film *Brotherhood of Man* (1946) was based.


MERRY CHRISTMAS 1954
William Bernal
Helen Smith Chris Ishii
Howard Beckerman Angelo Tarricone
Kenneth Drake Marvin Friedman
Lelia Deutch Henry Tanous
Harold Street Lucifer-
Guarnier Bard Wiggenhorn
Fred Crippen George Singer
Jack Goodford Harry Hess
U P A
Barbara Turner Ruth Mane Wardell Gaynor Ruth Buchanan Virginia Stockton
Edith Hustead Irwin Lapointe Arthur Wolber C. D. McCormick Hedy Kraemer
Stephen Bosustow Herbert Klynn Maxine Davis Rose Modaffari Nancy Lewis
Henrietta Jordan Rita Cummings Barbara Larson Vera McKinney Kitty Clark
Betty Pupillo Ruth Finch Melvin Getzler Jean Matheis Marjorie Bradford
Marne Fallis Leroy Baron Fred Swanson Pete Burness Irene Rutenberg 1954
Robert Cannon Ted Parmelee Ray Thursby Robert Brown Margie Hix U P A
Paul Marron Lew Keller Dick Shaw Leo Salkin Ted Sebern Merry Christmas
Aurie Battaglia Robert Danko T. Hee Jules Engel Ted Baker Happy New Year
Robert McIntosh Maurice Fagin Rudy Larriva United Productions of America
Thomas McDonald Frank Smith Alan Zaslove Cecile Niewenhous Edna Jacobs
Edgar Friedman Stanley Onaitis Stanley Wilkins Joe Siracusa John Eckes
Cecil Surry Barney Posner Sam Clayberger Allen Wade Dan Miller Sam Kai
Ken Hultgren Bud Partch Robert Longo Osmond Evans Patricia Ward u p a
Charleen Peterson Tony Pabian Rev Chaney Merry Christmas Happy New Year
Marion Stevens Barbara Merrill Madeline Ellis Harold Chang Gene Deitch

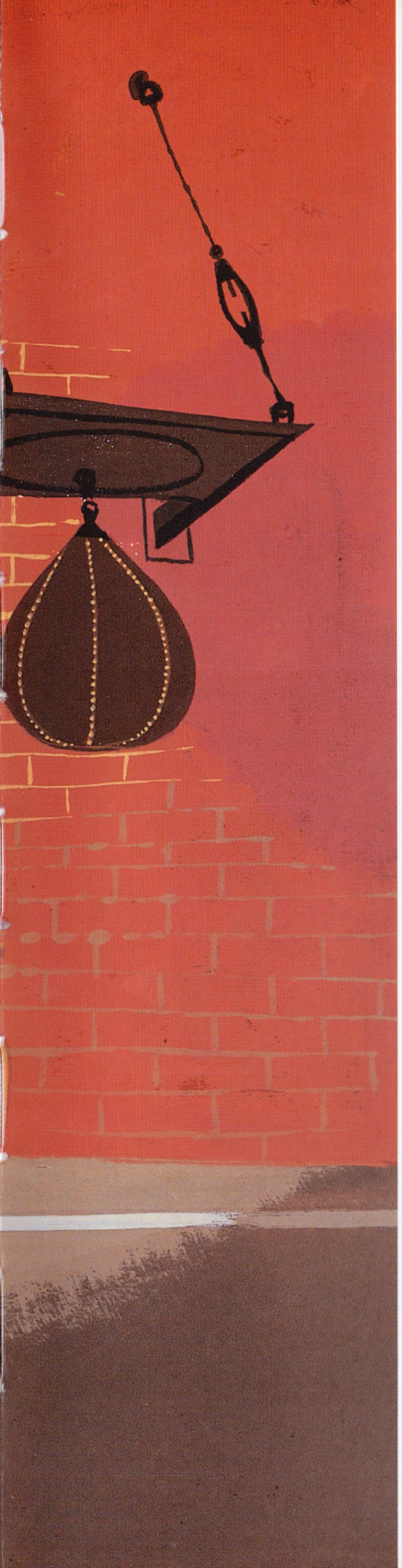
1954 UPA studio Christmas card.


COLOR CONTINUITY SKETCHES
Made for "The Magic Fluke" - entertainment cartoon currently being released to theatres by Columbia Pictures Corporation
COLUMBIA PICTURES PRESENTS
a FOX and CROW CARTOON
COLOR BY TECHNICOLOR
MAGIC FLUKE
SUPERVISION
TECHNICAL
STORY
DIRECTION
DESIGN
MUSIC
ANIMATION
PRODUCED BY
UPA
UNITED PRODUCTIONS OF AMERICA
GIRLS
CLUB BOBO
ZAZA
BONZI
RITZ
DANCE
FAT NICKS
SCHENKS RESTAURANT
DOGALOOF
BIG FAT IMPRESARIO
VOTE KELLY
FOXINI

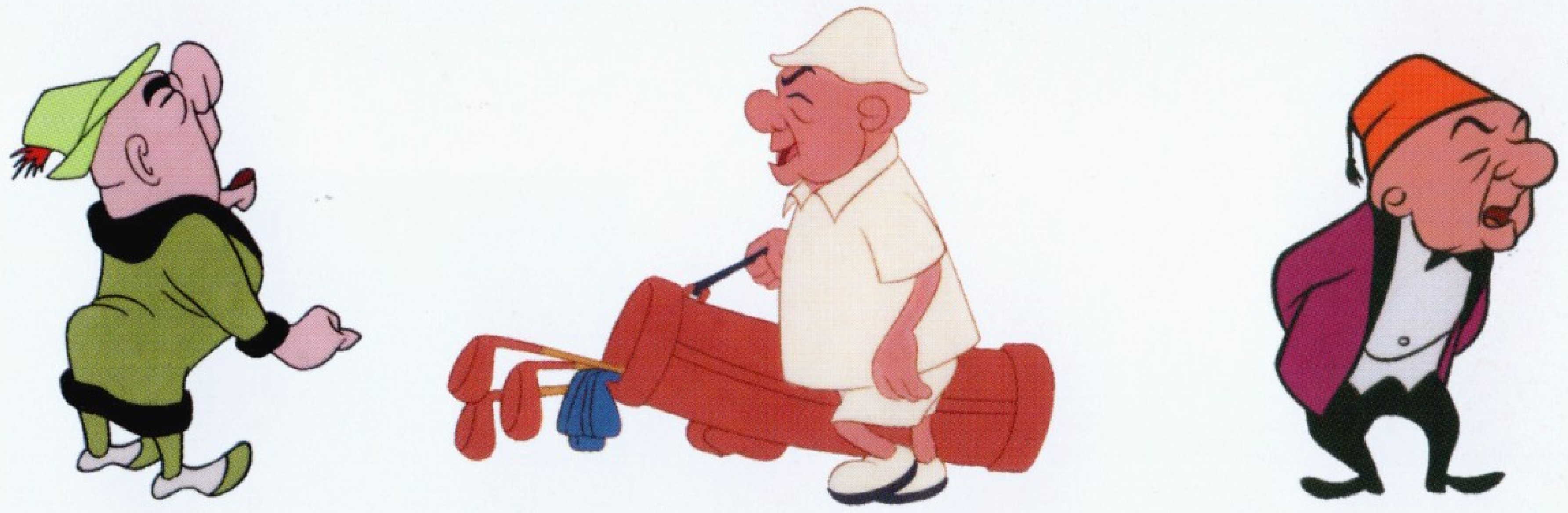
***The Magic Fluke* (1949)**
Director: John Hubley
Color continuity board
by Herb Klynn

***Punchy de Leon* (1950)**
Director: John Hubley
Background painting
by Herb Klynn

WRESTLING
MIKE FAGAN
SATURDAY AUGUST 4
STEVE WILL POST A NOTICE



HOTSY FOOTSY (1952)
Director: Bill Hurtz
Background painting
by Paul Julian

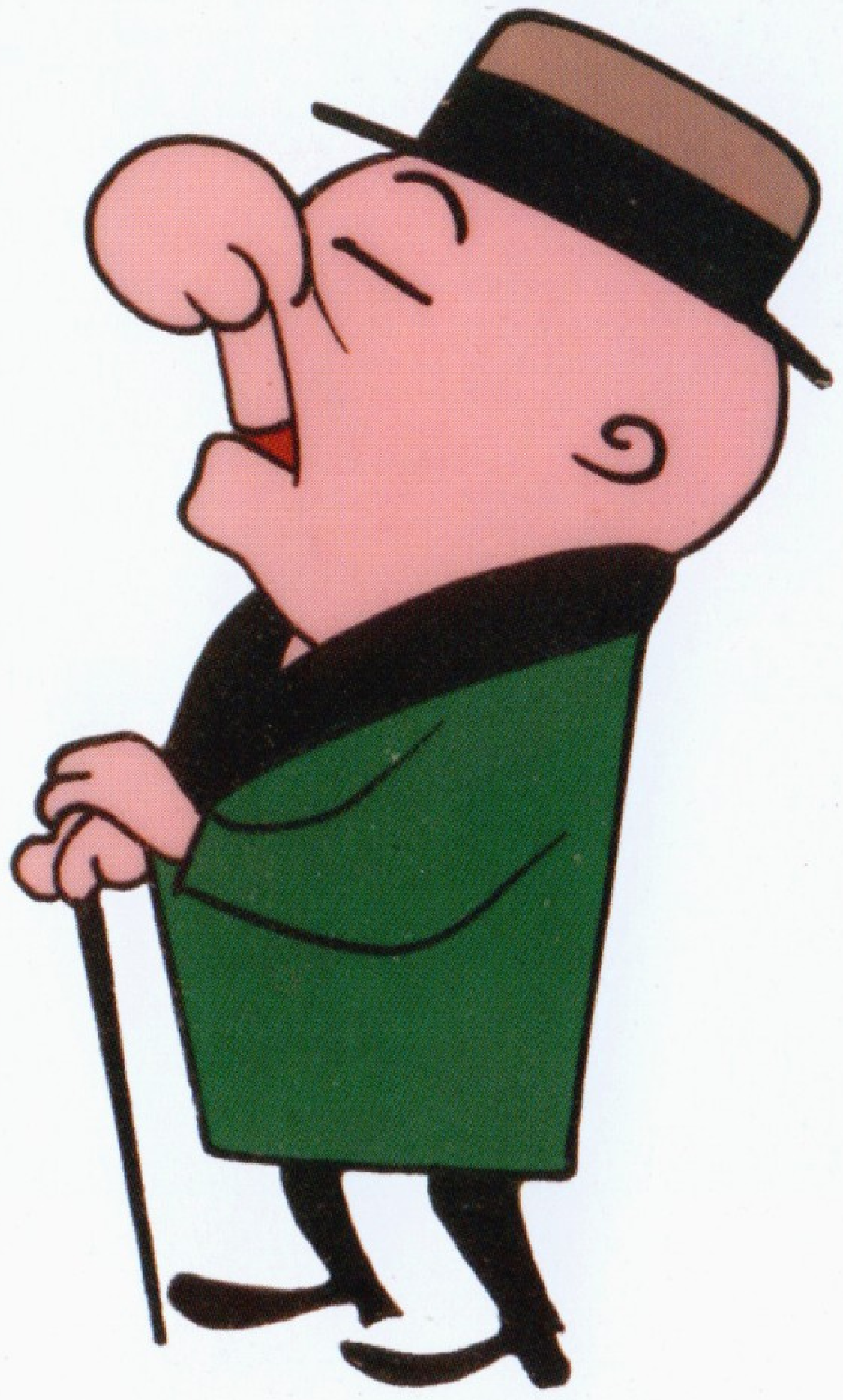


MISTER MAGOO

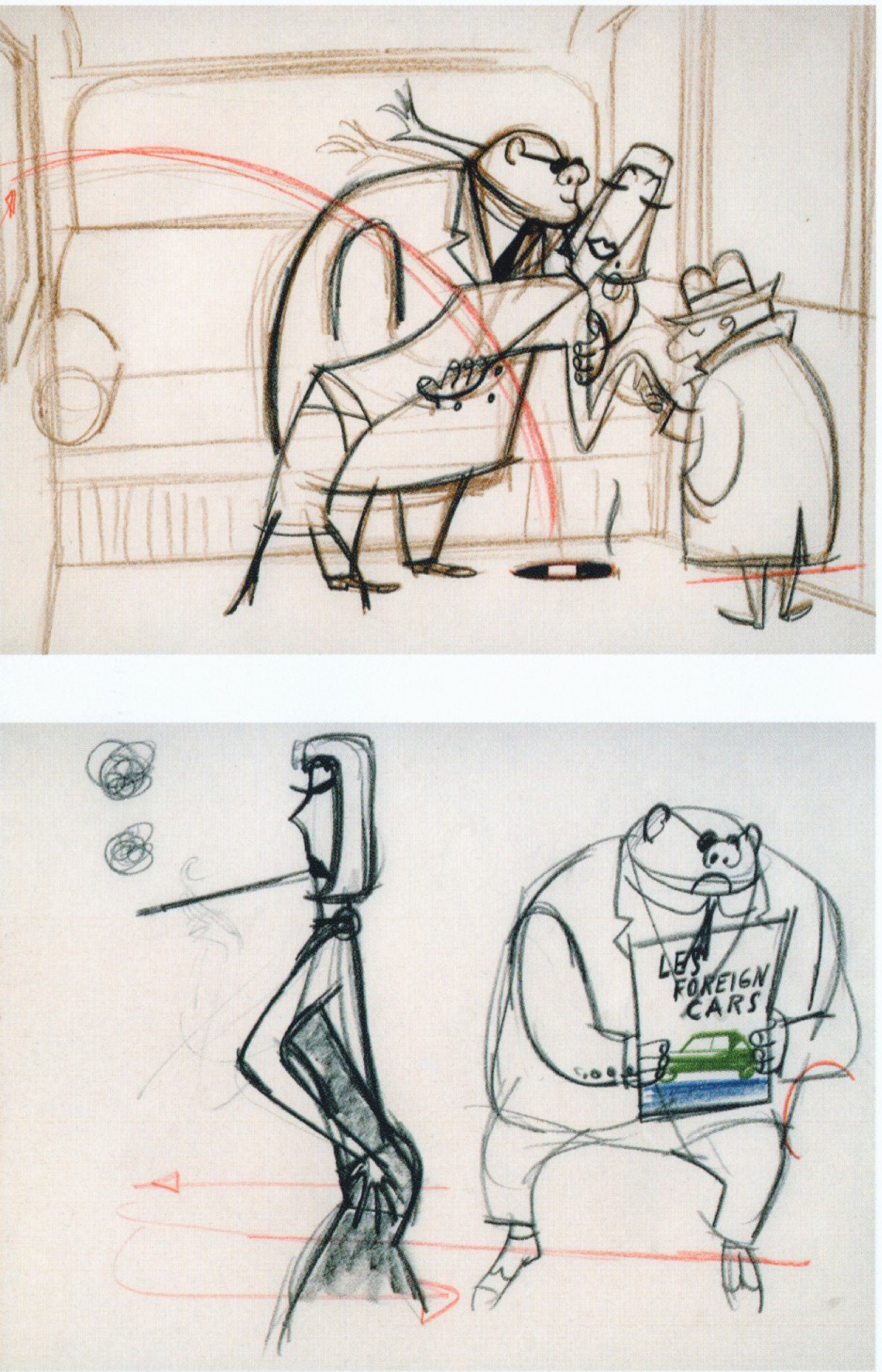
It is ironic that UPA's most successful and popular creation, the nearsighted Mister Magoo, was also its most graphically conventional. The cartoons, however, are still characteristically UPA and exude a contemporary sensibility, if not as radically as the studio's other films. Mister Magoo and his dim-witted nephew, Waldo, first appeared in *Ragtime Bear* (1949). The series was born out of UPA's desire to discontinue producing Columbia's clichéd funny-animal series featuring the Fox and Crow and to work on cartoons that featured humans. The characters, visually at least, were largely the creation of John Hubley, who also directed three of the first six Magoo films.

The idea of human characters in animated shorts is not in itself a revolutionary concept. Popeye and Elmer Fudd are just two of the obvious examples. But those characters could be burned to a crisp or broken into pieces and were capable of enduring all manner of physical punishment, whereas Magoo was treated in a realistic manner with the comedy emanating from satire and not slapstick. Hubley explained to the *New York Times*, "I prefer subjects that involve human relations and problems, even at the expense of action." Magoo's most prolific director, Pete Burness (1904–1969), agreed with this premise and told an interviewer that he felt the character held more in common with a live-action actor in terms of movement and acting. The later Magoo shorts broke somewhat from this principle, but the early films were firmly rooted in the belief that Magoo's actions should be as believable as those of a real human being. As a result of this conceptual direction, the style of the Magoo cartoons is in a more representational style than the studio's other shorts. "We tried for as much of an off-beat, two-dimensional feeling as we could, realizing that we were not dealing with a two-dimensional character, but with a three-dimensional one," Burness explained. "We got as much design value or high styling as we could into the backgrounds, but we tried to keep the characters representational."

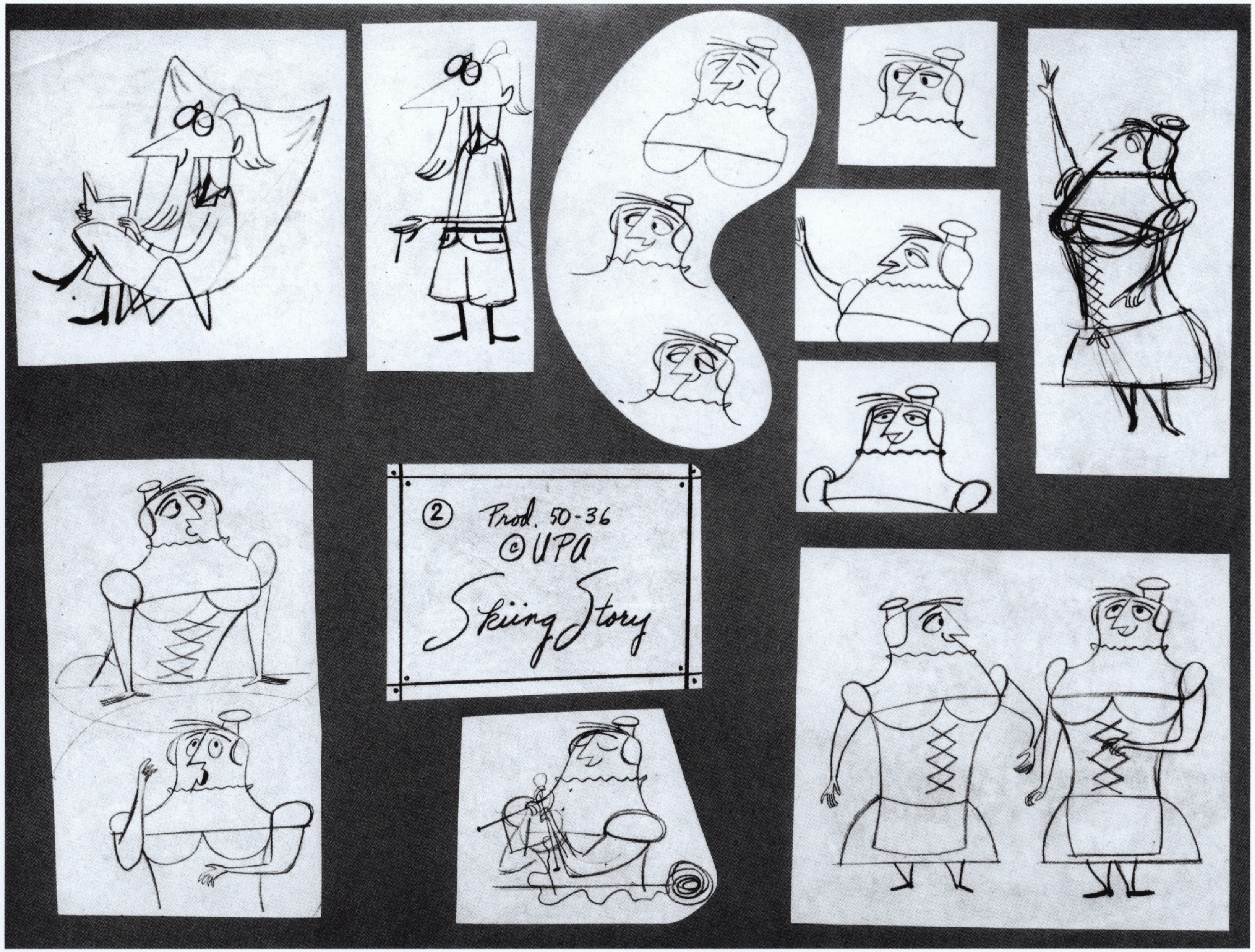
The Magoo shorts of the early 1950s featured a rotating graphic crew, with design and layout by Abe Liss, Ted Parmelee, and Bill Hurtz and background painting by Herb Klynn, Jules Engel, and Paul Julian. The series hit a nice stride in 1953, when Sterling Sturtevant took over as regular Magoo designer. Sturtevant redesigned Magoo, removing many of his gruff edges and giving him a baby-doll-head appeal. Her leaner and more streamlined look complemented the background paintings of Bob McIntosh (b. 1916), who had been Magoo's background stylist since 1952. McIntosh worked in perhaps the most simplified style of any of the UPA background painters. His "poster style" background paintings used minimal rendering techniques and clean geometric shapes, recalling the work of artists like Stuart Davis and Fernand Léger. The Sturtevant-McIntosh combo fell into a nice visual stride in 1954 and 1955 with films including *Destination Magoo, Magoo Goes Skiing, When Magoo Flew,* and *Magoo's Express.* When Sturtevant left the studio, Bob Dranko (b. 1924) took over as the primary Magoo designer and layout artist, working with Bob McIntosh until the theatrical series wrapped in 1959.



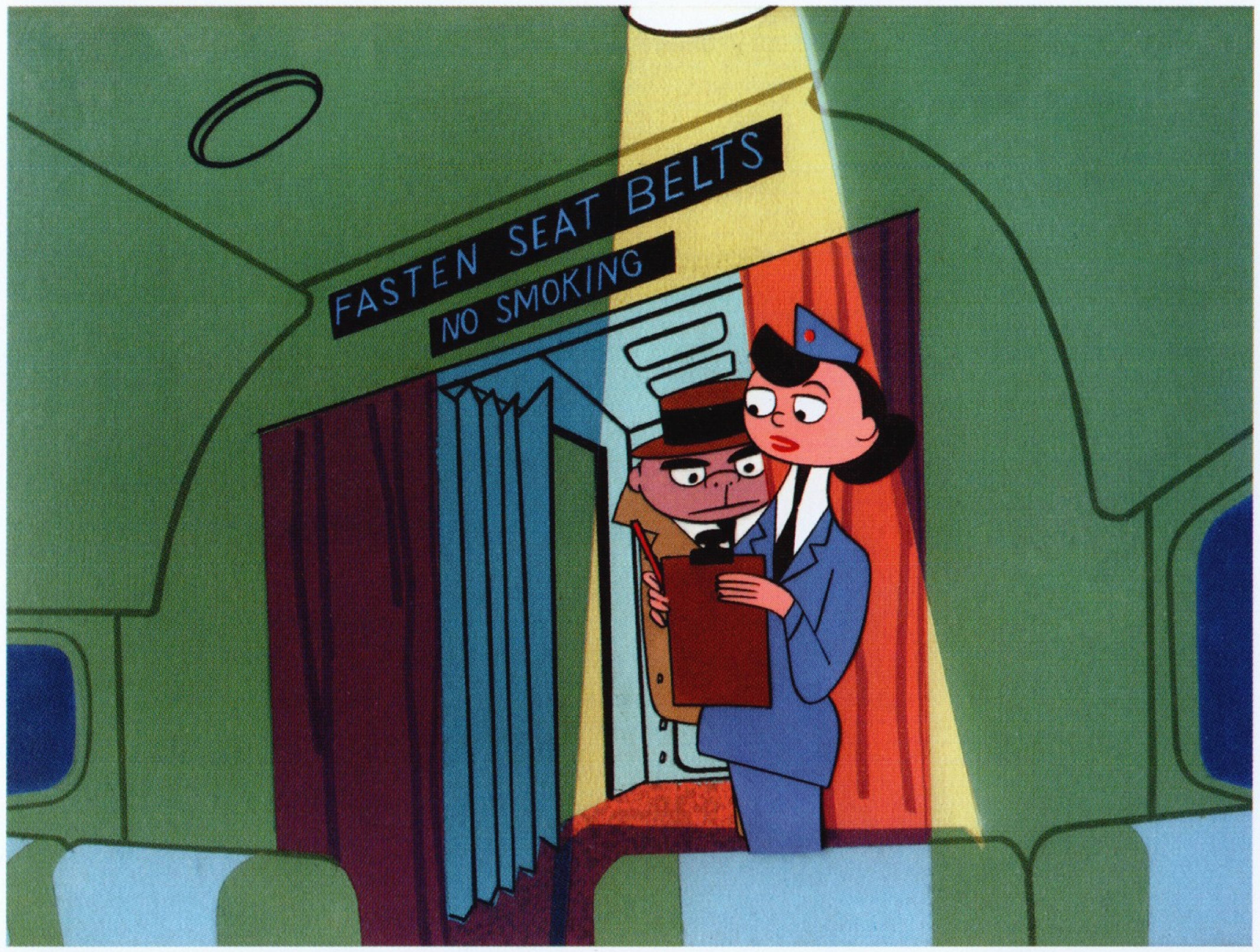
The design progression of Mister Magoo as he appeared in (above; left to right) *Ragtime Bear* (1949), *Grizzly Golfer* (1951), *Pink and Blue Blues* (1952), and (right) *When Magoo Flew* (1955).


LES FOREIGN CARS

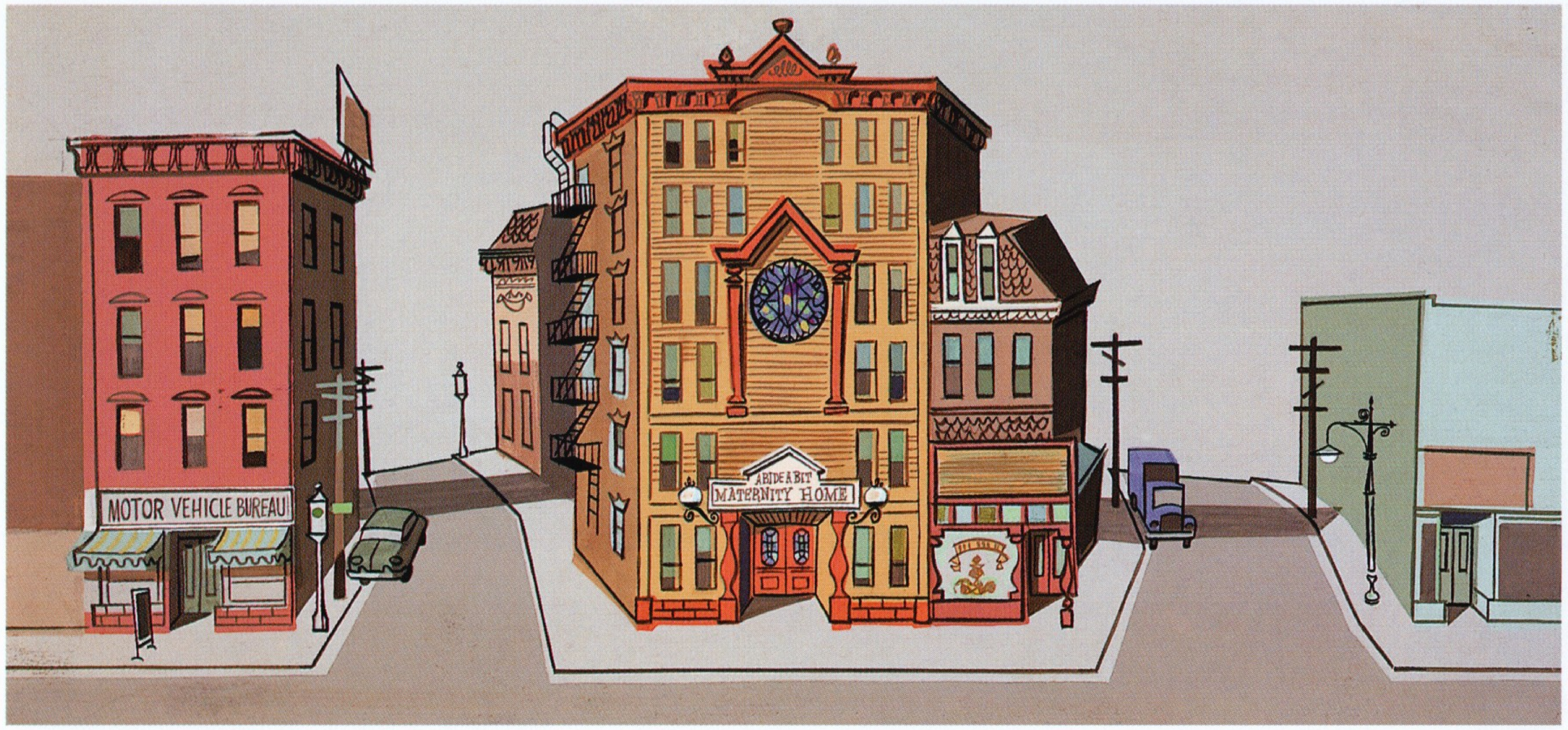
***Magoo's Express* (1955)**
Director: Pete Burness
Character layout and design
concepts by Sterling Sturtevant


② Prod. 50-36
©UPA
Skiing Story

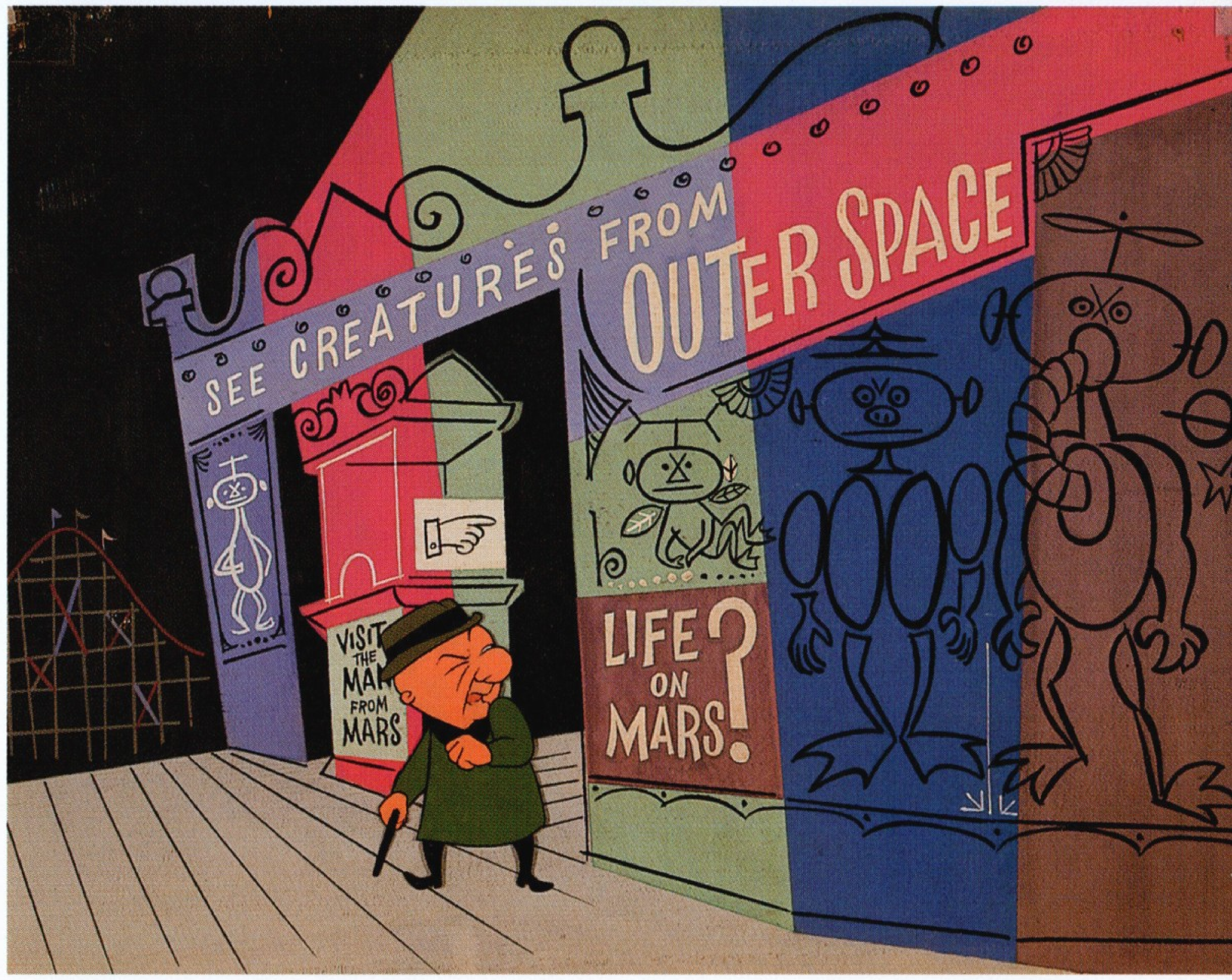
***Magoo Goes Skiing* (1954)**
Director: Pete Burness
Model sheet by Sterling
Sturtevant


FASTEN SEAT BELTS
NO SMOKING

When Magoo Flew **(1955)**
Director: Pete Burness
Production cel and background
painting by Bob McIntosh


MOTOR VEHICLE BUREAU
ABIDE A BIT
MATERNITY HOME

Safety Spin **(1953)**
Director: Pete Burness
Background painting
by Bob McIntosh


SEE CREATURES FROM
OUTER SPACE
VISIT THE MA FROM MARS
LIFE ON MARS?

Destination Magoo **(1954)**
Director: Pete Burness
Production cel and background
painting by Bob McIntosh

Jules Engel's Magoo Backgrounds

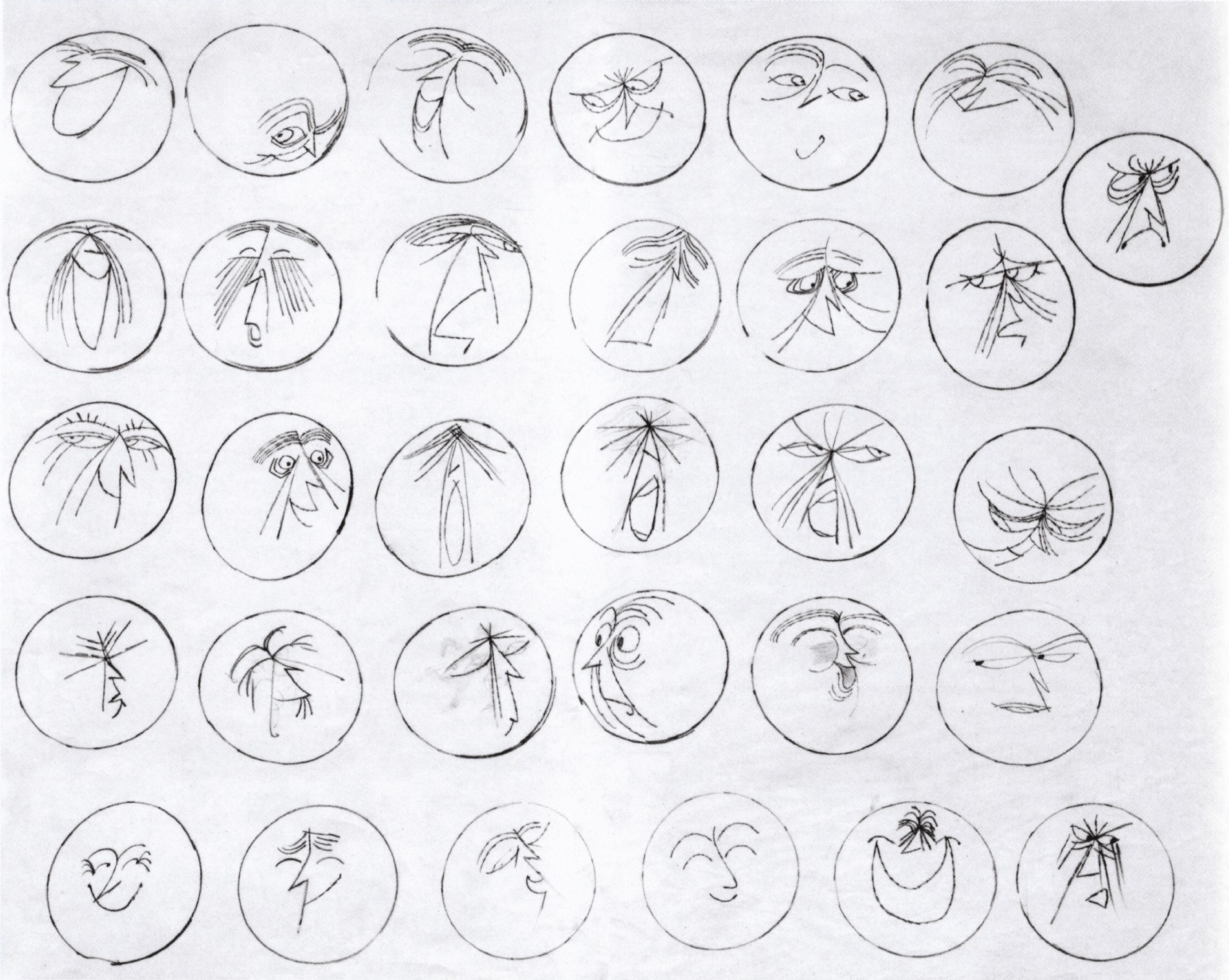
Though the Magoo backgrounds had to represent three-dimensional space in a more literal fashion than the one-shot UPA shorts, they still provided ample opportunity for design exploration, as illustrated in these two paintings of a theater backstage by Jules Engel. Engel painted the *Bare-Faced Flatfoot* (1951, above) background from an Abe Liss pencil layout; the *Stage Door Magoo* (1955, opposite) background was based on a Bob Dranko layout. The strong graphic elements of Liss's and Dranko's original layouts, combined with Engel's individualized treatment of each cartoon, allow for exciting interpretations of similar subject matter.

BILL HURTZ

To fully understand and appreciate the contributions of UPA director Bill Hurtz, one has to look beyond his theatrical film output. Hurtz (1919–2000), who started as a designer at the studio in the 1940s, directed only three Columbia theatrical shorts, but he was the studio's primary director of industrial films in the early 1950s and helmed numerous stylistically eclectic films, including *Man on the Land* (produced for the American Petroleum Institute), *Man Alive!* (for the American Cancer Society), *More than Meets the Eye* (CBS Radio), *Look Who's Driving* (Aetna Casualty and Surety Company), and the animated portions of *Our Mr. Sun*, the first in Frank Capra's *Bell Science* series.

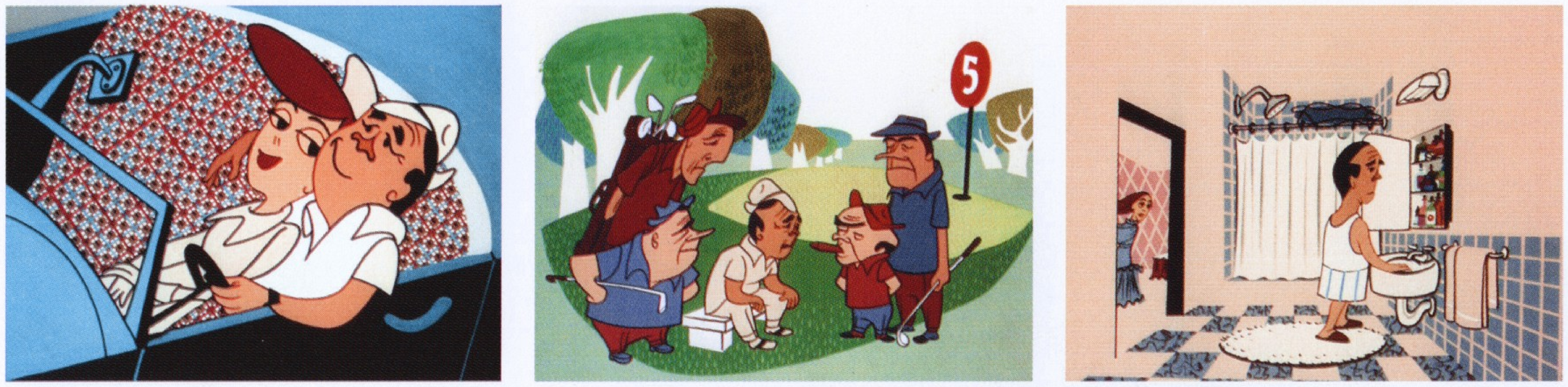
Commissioned and industrial films had been an important part of UPA's survival since its earliest days, when it produced training films for various government agencies, and *Hell-Bent for Election* and *Brotherhood of Man* for the United Auto Workers. Industrial film projects in particular were always welcomed at the studio. Not only did the corporate sponsors offer generous production budgets, but the films were also creatively challenging because the sponsors knew and cared little about the animation, which afforded the artists freedom to experiment with different styles. It was a win-win situation, except when the films contained messages that were at odds with the beliefs of the studio's artists, as was the case with *Man on the Land*. Hurtz recounted the difficulties of that particular assignment:

> *The American Petroleum Institute is made up of representatives of all the oil companies and they wanted to make a film extolling the free enterprise system's role in developing power, through the gasoline engine, [to convey the message] that government interference stifled enterprise. Here we were, a bunch of thinly disguised "Reds" at UPA, and we get a project like this with lots of bucks in it. How the hell do we work on this pap? It was a real crisis. We had a meeting on how to handle this. And we got the idea of taking all this reactionary pap and putting it in ballad form. Once it's sung, the sting goes out of it. It becomes a stylized thing. We hired Terry Gilkyson. This ballad played throughout the film; wherever the message came in, we'd do the ballad.*

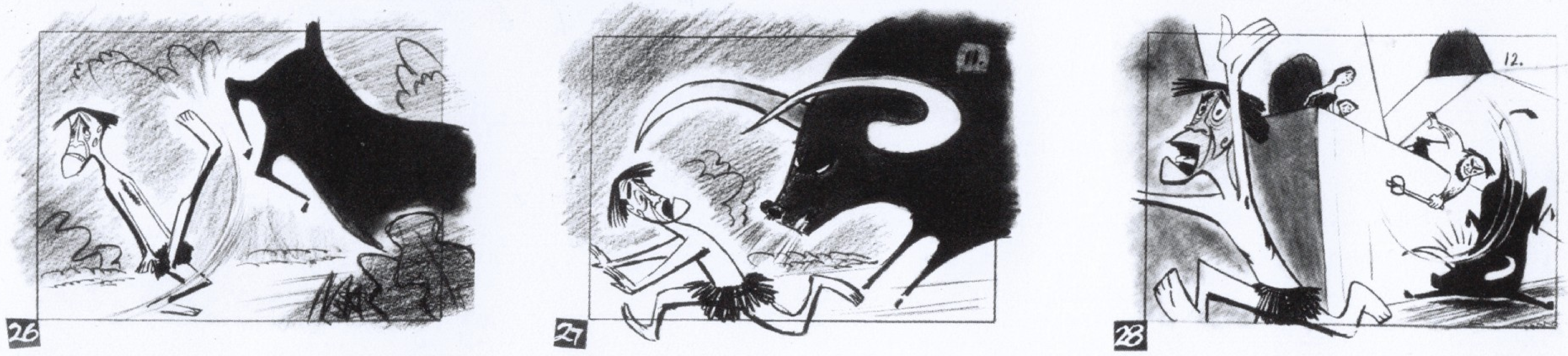


OUR MR. SUN (1953)
Animation director: Bill Hurtz
Model sheet by unknown designer

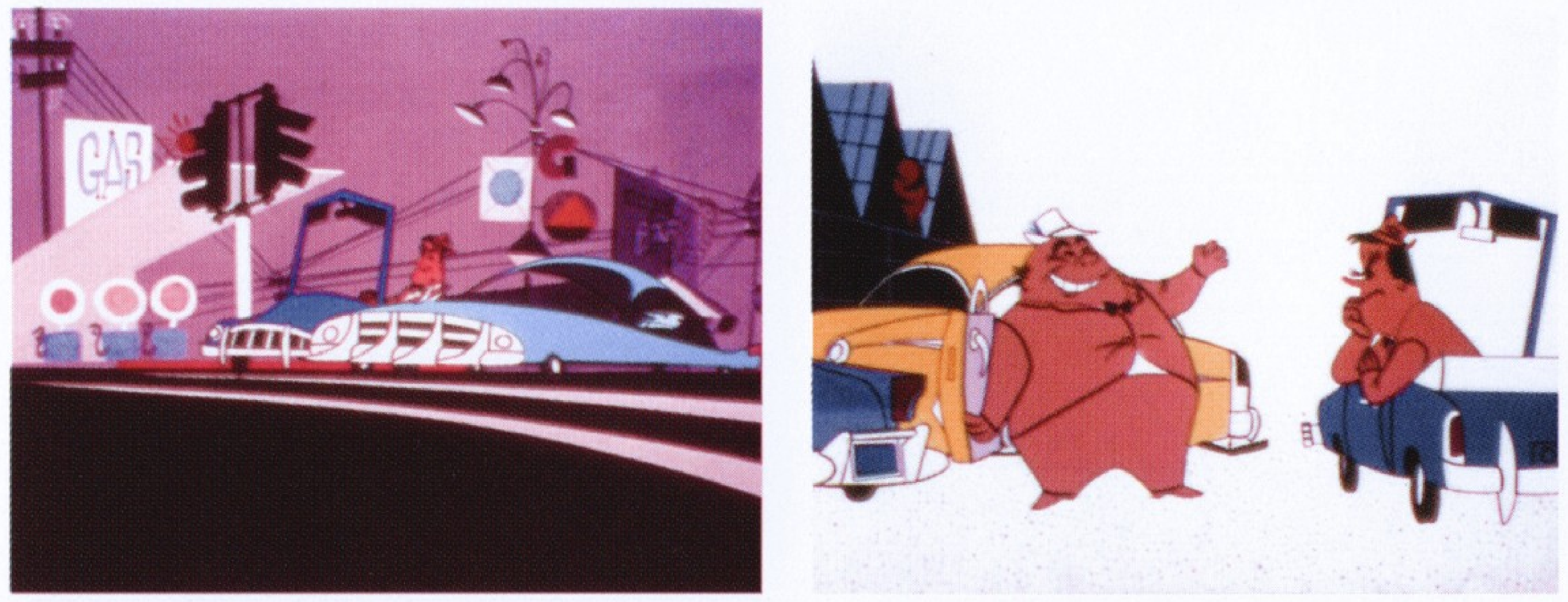
"[The sun] was originally a knob-nosed character, a conventional face inside a circle. I had an idea of having the sun [drawn as] a series of expression lines. Everything radiated out, and when he beamed, these lines shot out from everywhere, and he looked radiant. Kind of a pun; very often we got some of our ideas out of puns: draw what it says, literally." —Bill Hurtz



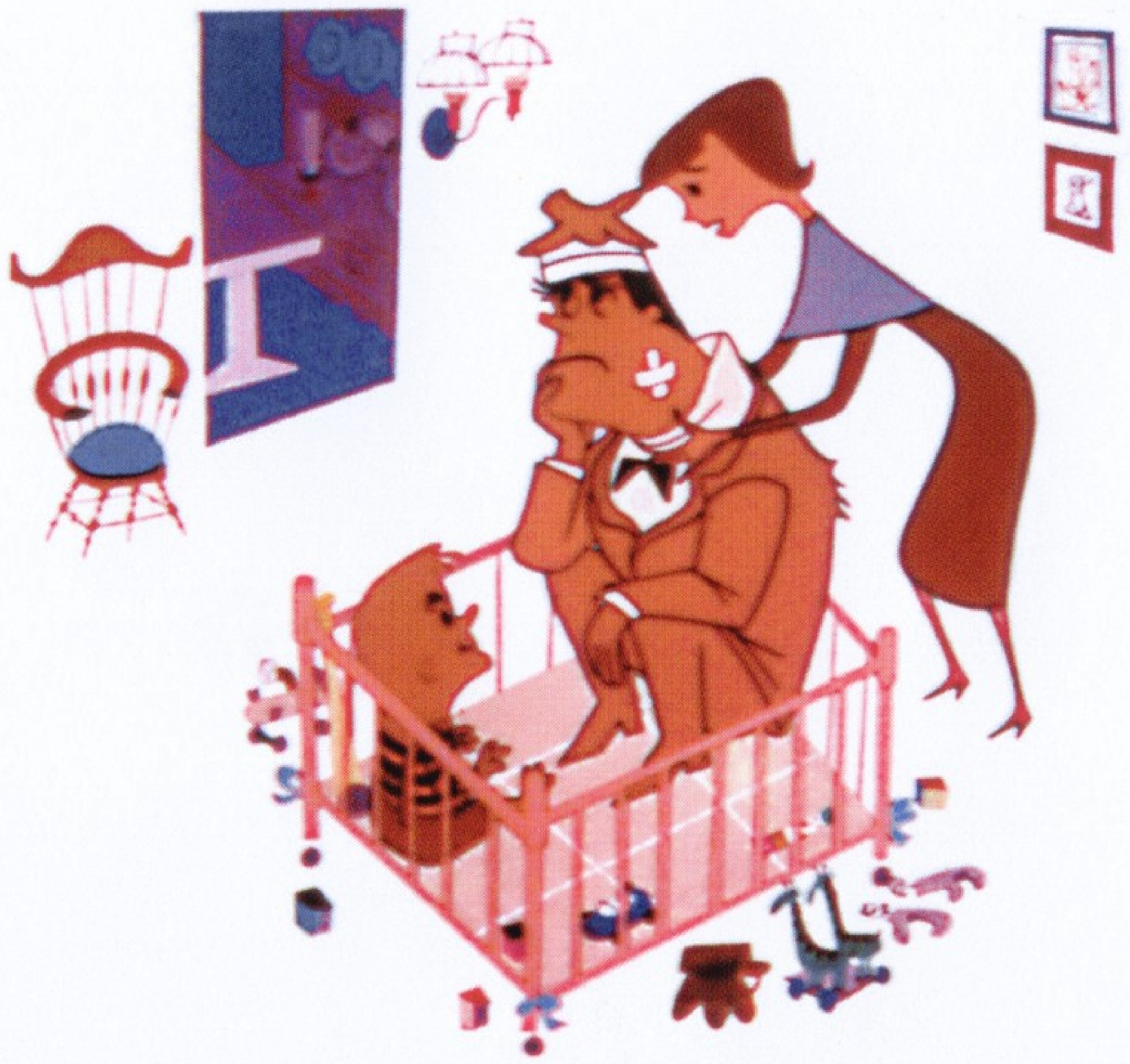
***Man Alive!* (1952)**
Director: Bill Hurtz
Film stills



***Man on the Land* (1951)**
Director: Bill Hurtz
Storyboard panels



***Look Who's Driving* (1954)**
Director: Bill Hurtz
Film stills



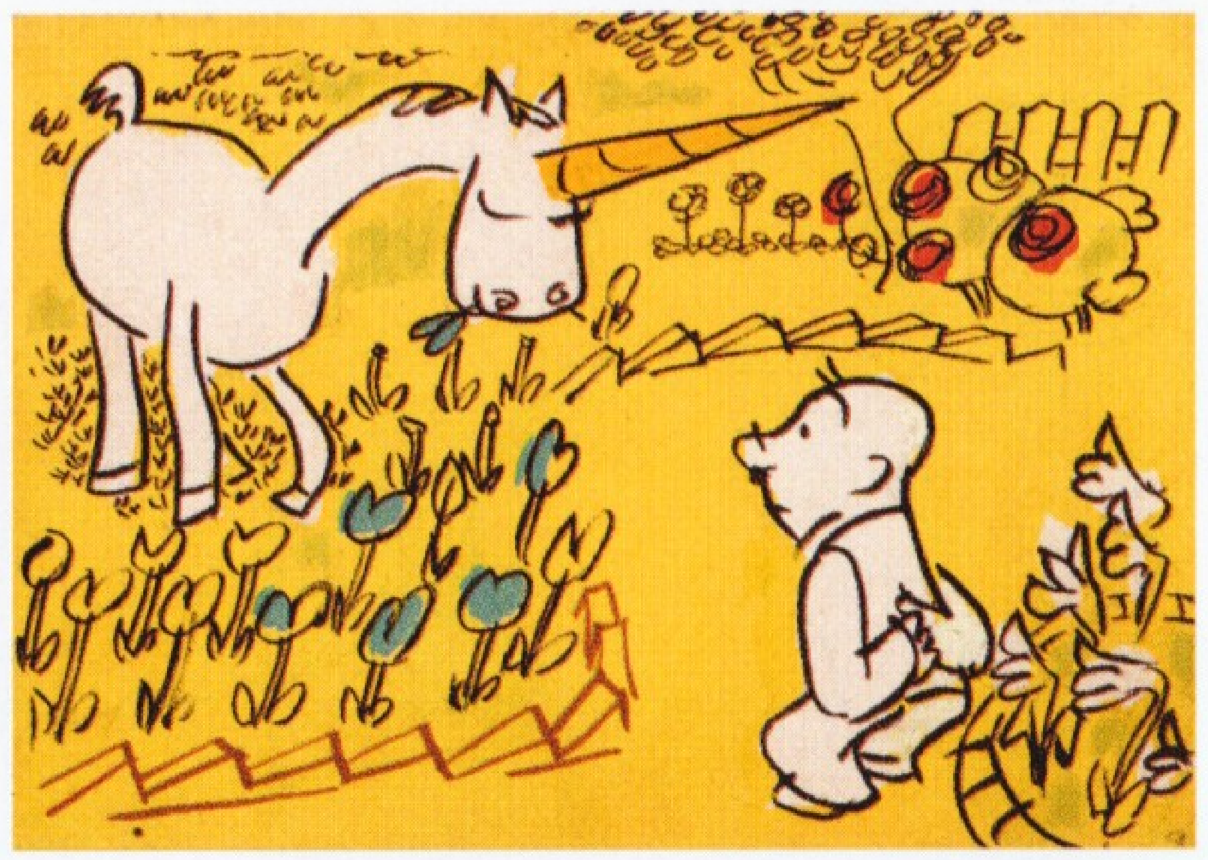
A UNICORN IN THE GARDEN

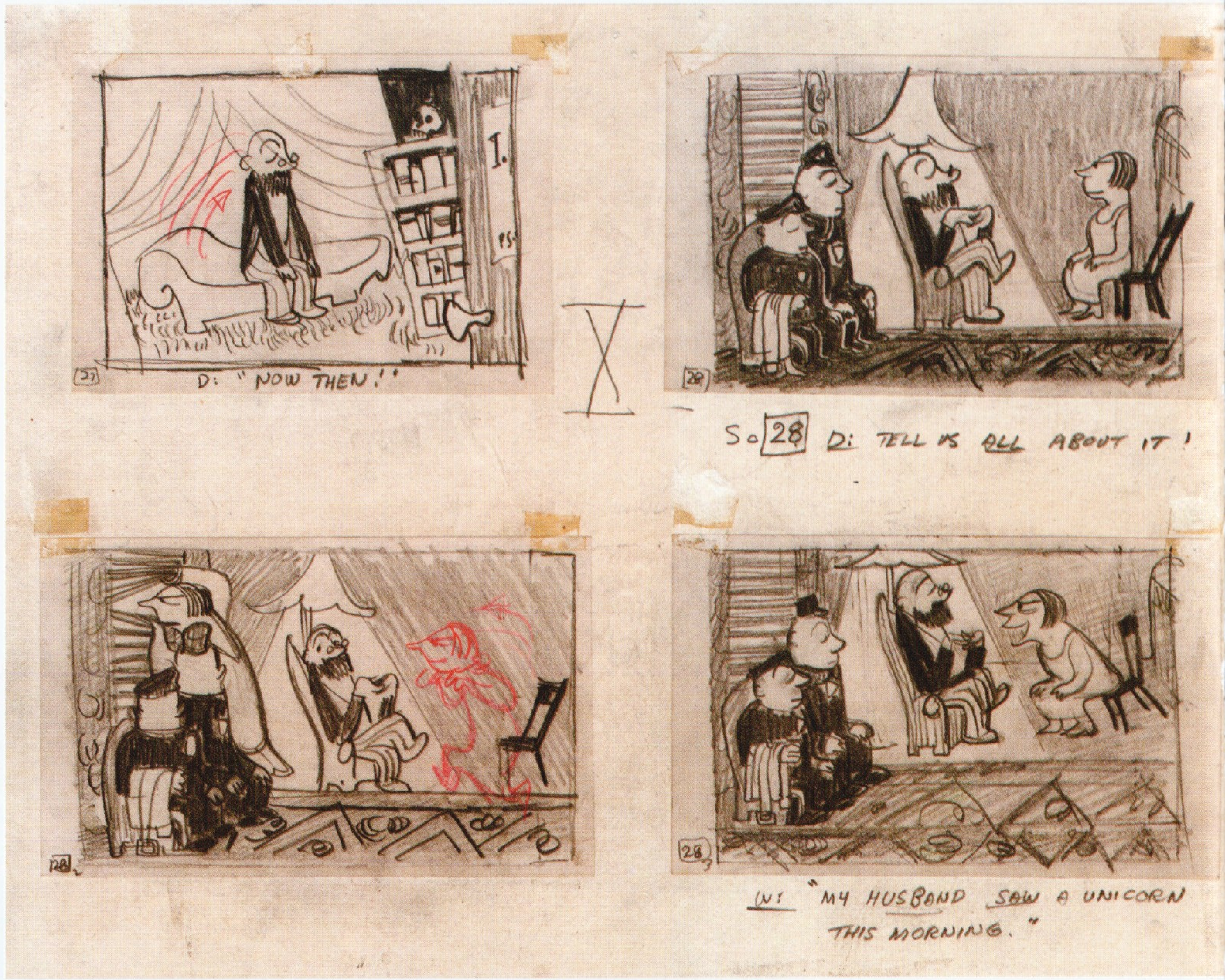
For *A Unicorn in the Garden*, an adaptation of a James Thurber short story, Bill Hurtz carefully studied every drawing he could find by the famed American satirist, not only to capture the uniquely naive flavor of Thurber's art but also to help inspire the movements of the characters. "I got the idea for the arm extending to close the Venetian blinds from Thurber; the legs in the run came out of a Thurber run," Hurtz explained. "Whenever this repressed soul broke loose, part of his body extended, which seemed to be what Thurber had in his cartoons."

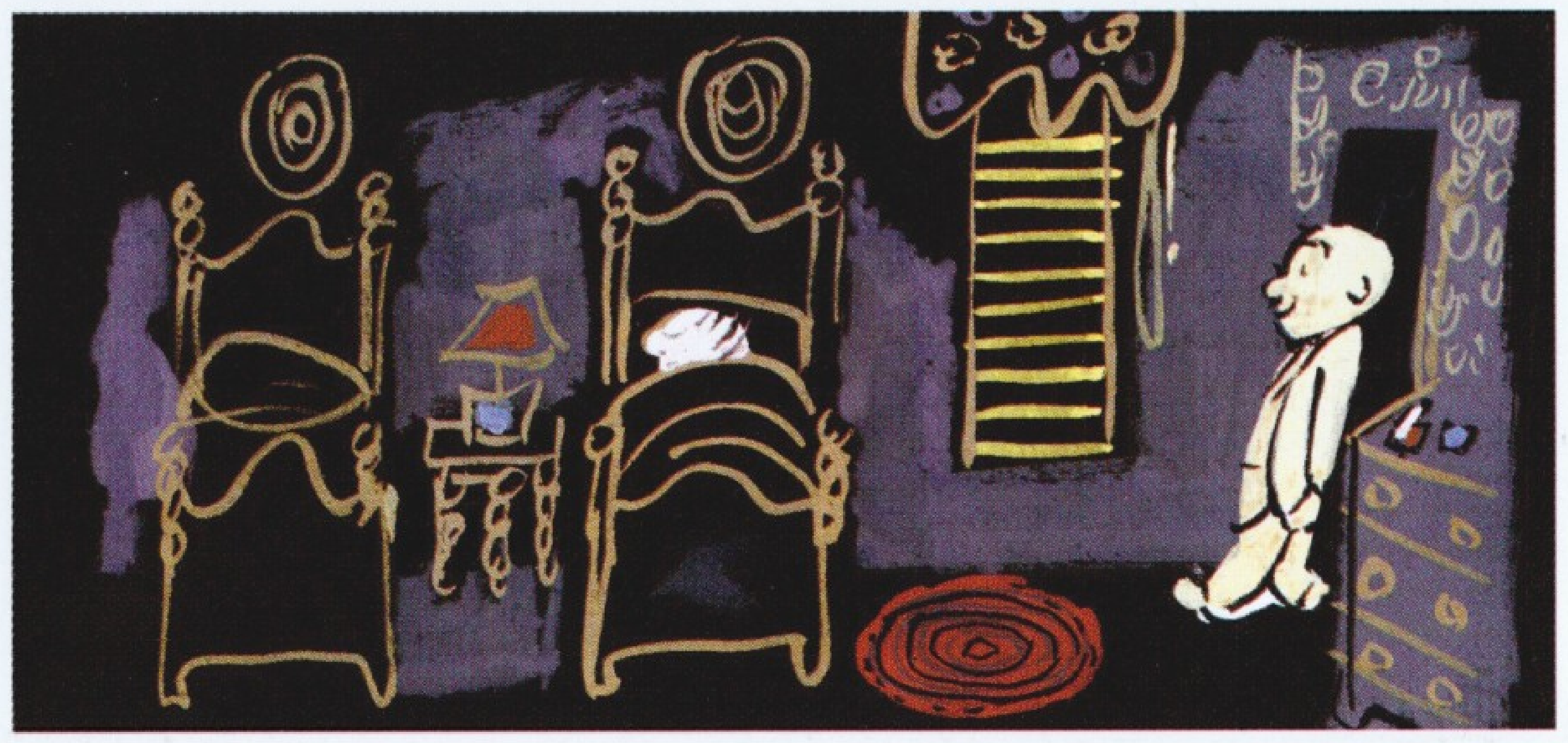
Some people, though, questioned the wisdom of translating Thurber to animation. Filmmaker Philip Stapp raised the issue in the *Journal of the British Film Academy*, noting that some of UPA's least successful films had been those based on the work of illustrators, such as *A Unicorn in the Garden* and *Madeline*. Stapp wrote:

> *Since the quality of both Thurber's and Bemelman's drawings depends on a subtlety and unevenness of line which is impossible to use in the animation technique, where every celluloid must have an almost mechanical similarity, the flavor of the original is lost and the result is far less successful than the work of lesser known artists, whose training within the film medium has taught them its restrictions.*

In spite of Stapp's reservations, it's hard to imagine Thurber's art being translated into animation any more successfully than it was in *A Unicorn in the Garden*. Hurtz himself was well aware of the limitations inherent in the animation process, and he took unconventional measures to retain the flavor of Thurber's singular drawing style, such as assigning the animation cleanup to "some of the poorest draftsmen in the studio, [to get] that nice lumpy look." Similarly, the film's color stylist and background painter, Bob Dranko, always considered it a backhanded compliment when Hurtz told an interviewer the reason that Dranko was chosen for the project: "We got one of our newer background painters for the film because they didn't have that slick look yet."



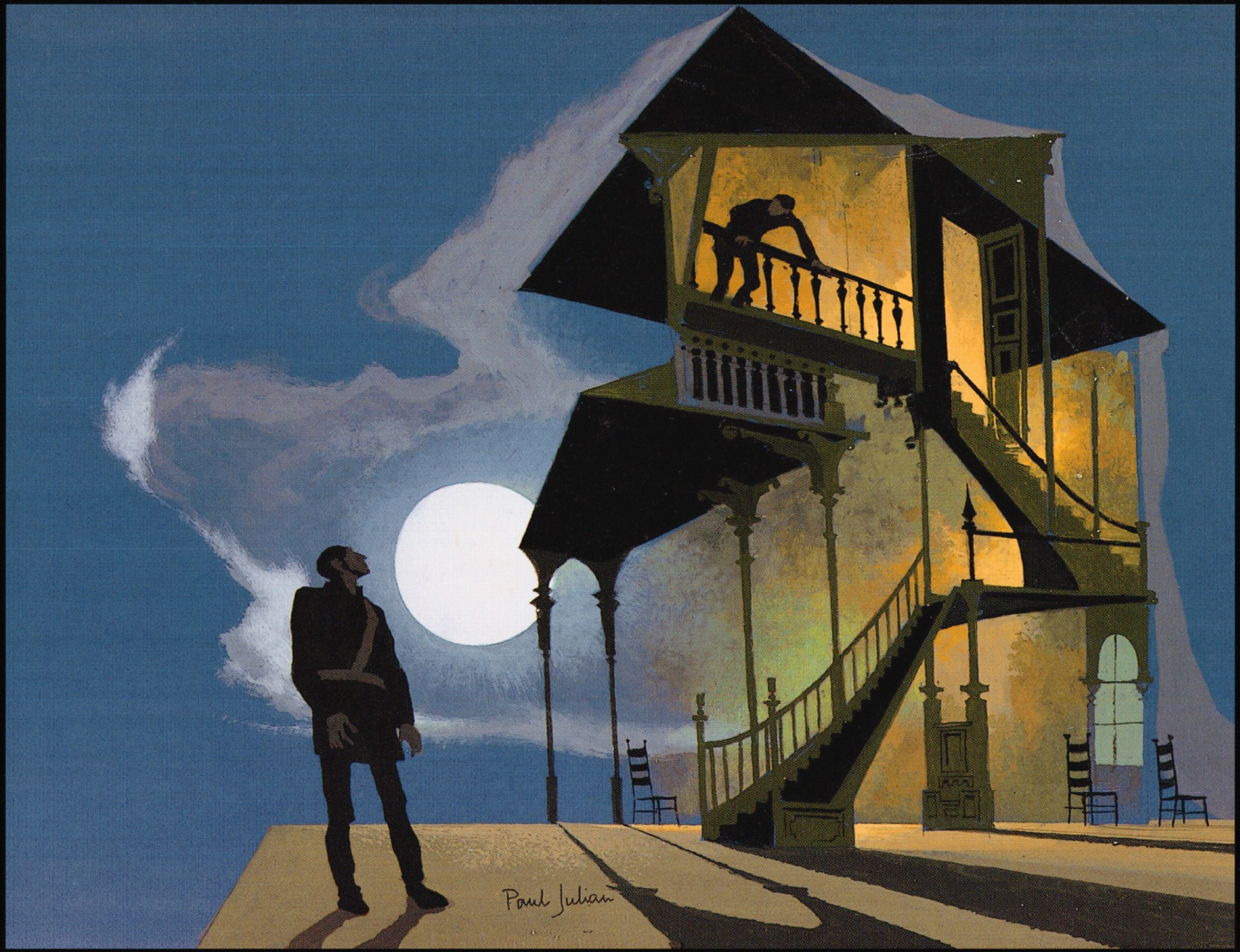

I.
27
D: "NOW THEN!"
28
So 28 D: TELL US ALL ABOUT IT!
28
28
W: "MY HUSBAND SAW A UNICORN THIS MORNING."

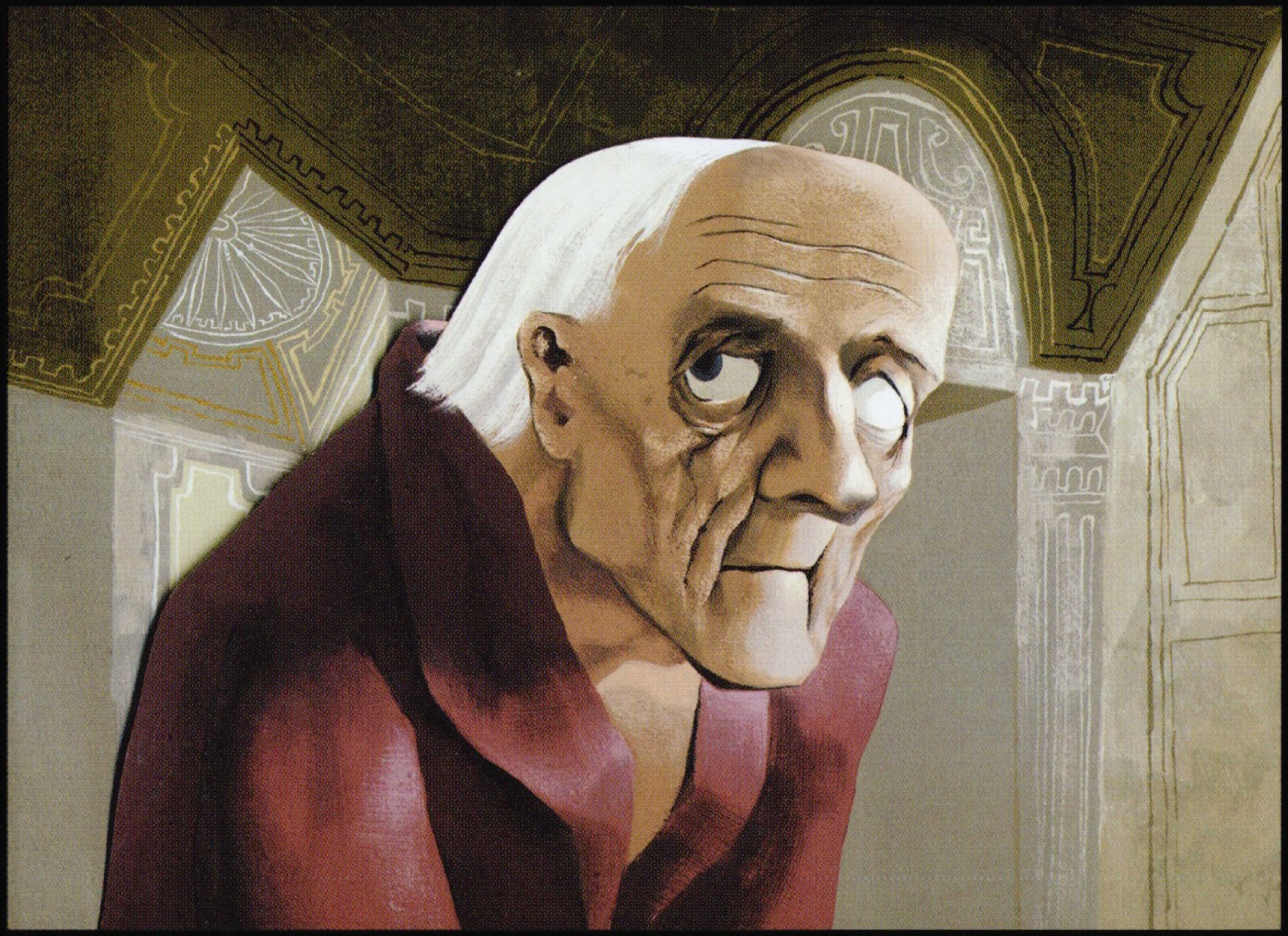


A UNICORN IN THE GARDEN (1953)
Director: Bill Hurtz
Top and bottom: Color styling sketches by Bob Dranko
Middle: A page from Bill Hurtz's storyboard

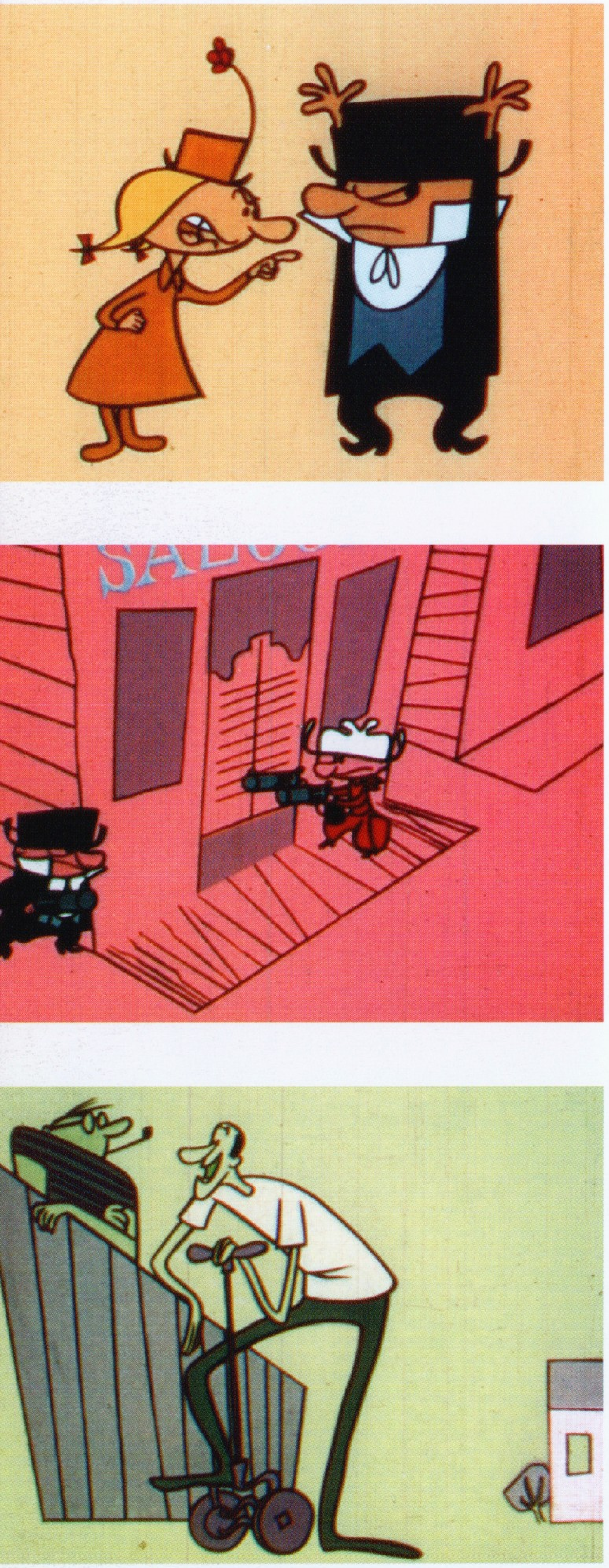
PAUL JULIAN

Paul Julian (1914–1995), who was capable of working in a wide variety of styles, provided stylishly painted backgrounds for many UPA shorts. Julian's most famous work at the studio were his paintings for *The Tell-Tale Heart*, a densely pictorial painting approach that veered from the typically spare UPA design sensibility. Bill Hurtz spoke about the element that he felt was most impressive about Julian's paintings: "Beyond color, Paul also has the most magnificent sense of values of any artist I've ever known, except Velázquez. Paul will relate things in a high key—all light values—or in low keys, in such a way that it makes most people's work seem blunt."





***THE TELL-TALE HEART* (1953)**
Director: Ted Parmelee
Above: Concept painting
by Paul Julian
Left: Background painting
by Paul Julian



***Willie the Kid* (1952)**
Director: Bobe Cannon
Film stills

Bobe Cannon

Director Robert "Bobe" Cannon (1909–1964) is without doubt one of animation's great designers, but unlike most artists who designed characters or backgrounds, Cannon designed movement. Characters in his films move around in a wholly invented graphic manner that is as stylized as their designs. Cannon was unafraid to acknowledge the fact that the characters on screen were drawings made on a flat surface and that they could behave with designed mannerisms that would be impossible to replicate in real life. Cannon's regular designer T. Hee (1911–1988) explained that "at UPA, we always talked about animated drawings, never animated cartoons. . . . We wanted the feeling that you were looking at *drawings that moved*."

The drawings in Cannon's cartoons move in fantastic ways: they can pause in midair to speak or roll and bounce around every which way. In *Fudget's Budget* (1954), the characters are designed in a profile view and dissolve into straight lines when they turn to face the audience. Zach Schwartz described Cannon's animation as a type of acting that "was not a kind of exaggeration or a caricature of reality, but took its life from pure design elements." This style of animation was by no means exclusive to Cannon, but few pursued it as vigorously as Cannon did in his films at UPA.

Cannon, like Freddie Moore and Emery Hawkins, was one of those natural animators who had an innate feeling for movement. Prior to becoming a director at UPA in 1950, he had spent his entire career as an animator, primarily at Schlesinger studio, where he started in 1934, but also stints at Disney, MGM, and UPA. His sole directorial credit prior to his debut theatrical short, *The Miner's Daughter* (1950), had been UPA's *Brotherhood of Man* (1946). Animator Mike Kazaleh notes that Cannon's design sense was

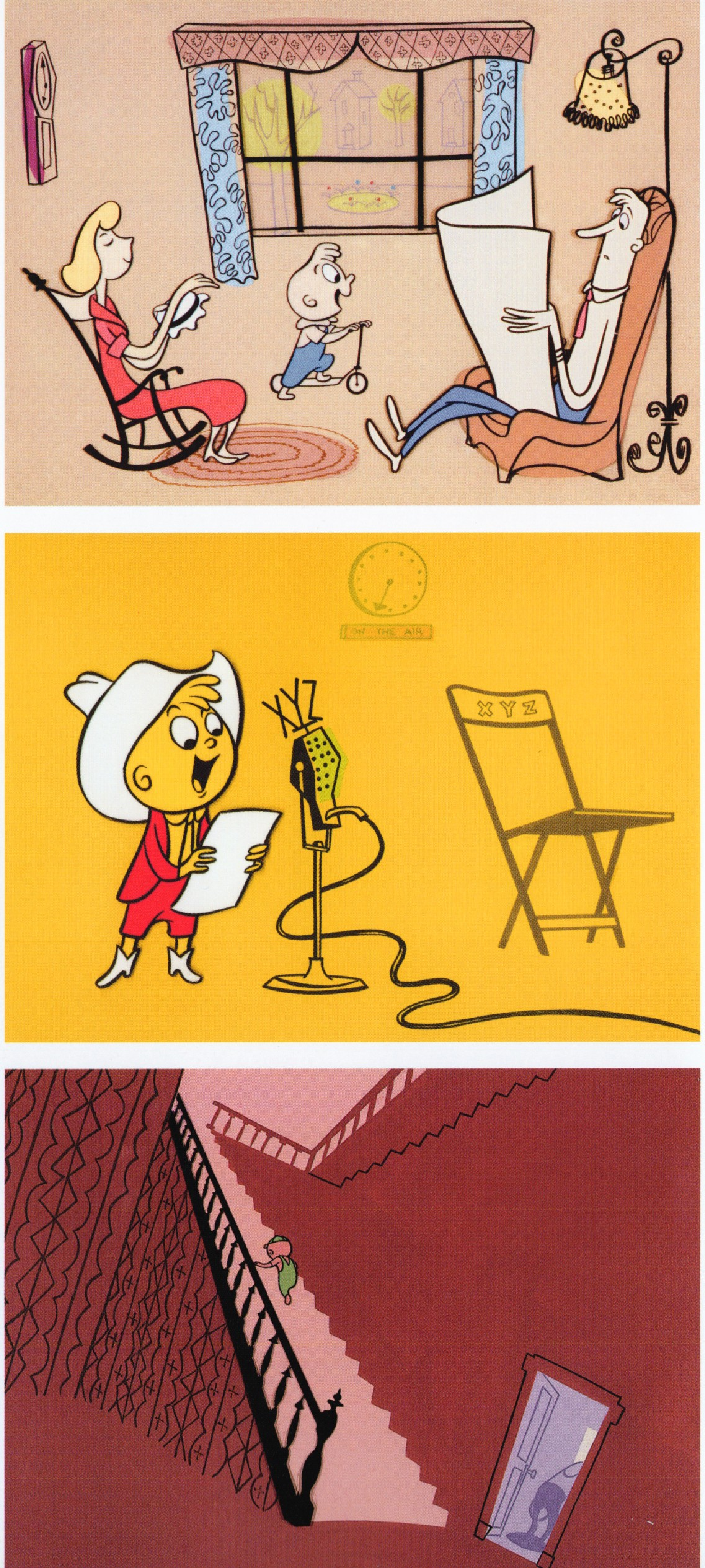
> *apparent from his earliest animation on the Warner Bros. shorts. He was drawing with graceful, interlocking compound curves at a time when most of the studio was working with more segmented characters. Cannon's work at Warners had a profound effect on Ken Harris, Lloyd Vaughan and Ben Washam. The influence was present in Chuck Jones' unit for many years after Cannon left.*

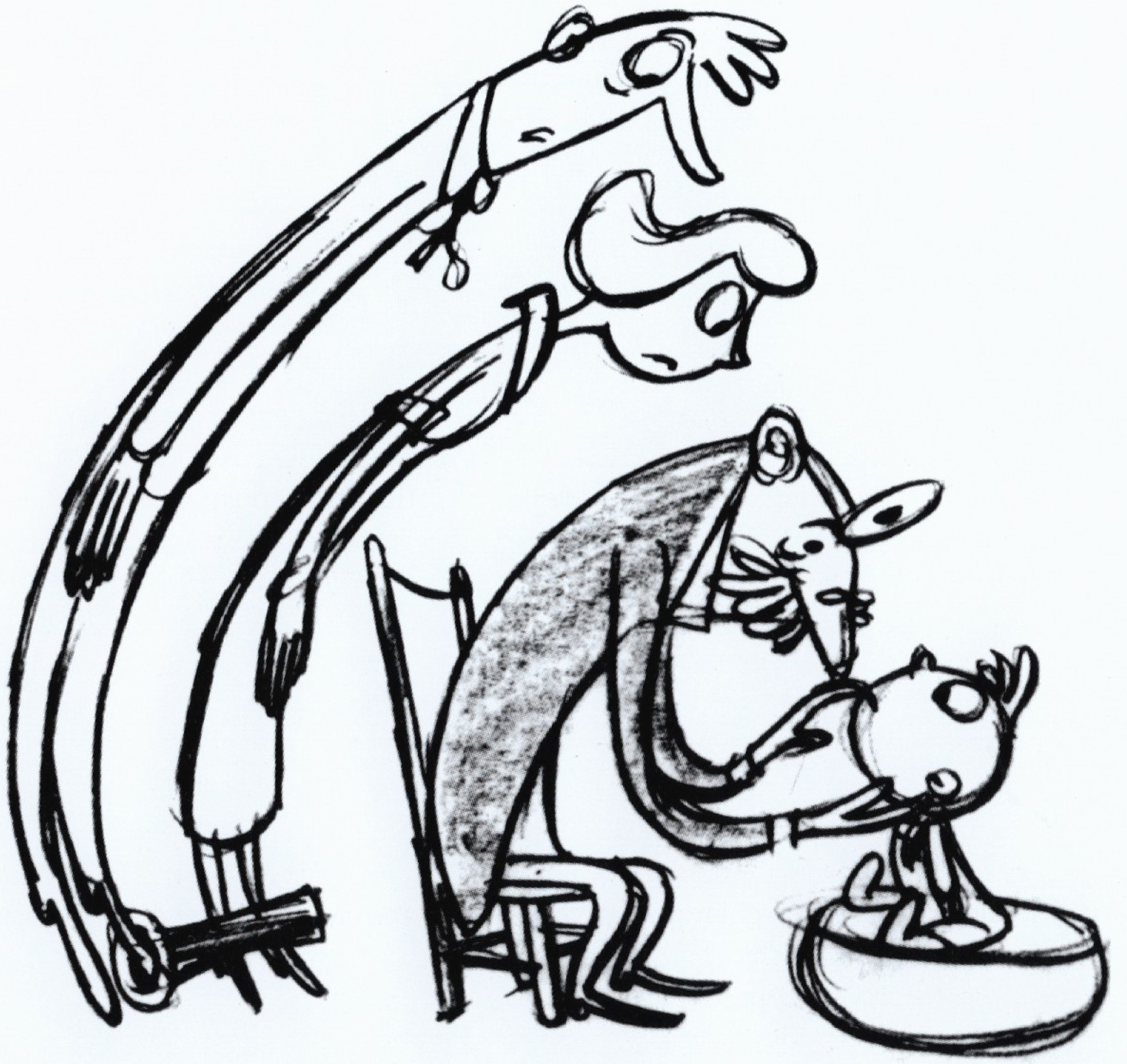
Design drives every aspect of Cannon's animation, down to the smallest details, such as how a character speaks. "I remember Bobe and I talking about patterns of movement in dialogue," recalls Cannon unit-animator Alan Zaslove. "He had a whole theory on dialogue; you won't see in Bobe's pictures things like tongues and teeth." Ironically, Cannon's wholly unrealistic movement resulted from the astute observation of reality. Zaslove recalls an incident while driving to work with Cannon when they had stopped at a train crossing: Cannon was studiously observing how the warning signal arm was moving upward. He excitedly told Zaslove to study how the signal arm moved upward at a different speed than it moved down. "But it wasn't an academic dissection of the movement," Zaslove explains. "It was understanding the flow of things."

Cannon's films are spare in the sense of character and background design. Various artists designed his films, including T. Hee, Bill Hurtz, and Lew Keller, but there is a general consistency in design, with characters who are emphatically linear, symmetrical, and unadorned with detail. In Cannon's most successful films—notably *Willie the Kid* (1952), *Christopher Crumpet* (1953), *Fudget's Budget* (1954), and *The Jaywalker* (1956)—these simple characters are placed front and center within sparse environments, allowing Cannon an open stage for experimentation. In films like *Madeline* (1952) and *Christopher Crumpet*, characters move through multiple scenes in continuous, tightly choreographed paths and perform in graceful patterns of motion. "It isn't a question of animation—he loved movement," Jules Engel said. "And he was always thinking how to move characters, how to do a gesture that would be more meaningful. He had it coming from his gut, he was working from inside."

Opposite: ***Gerald McBoing Boing* (1951)**
Director: Bobe Cannon
Production cel and background

XYZ
GERALD McBOING BOING
gerald


ON THE AIR
XYZ
XYZ

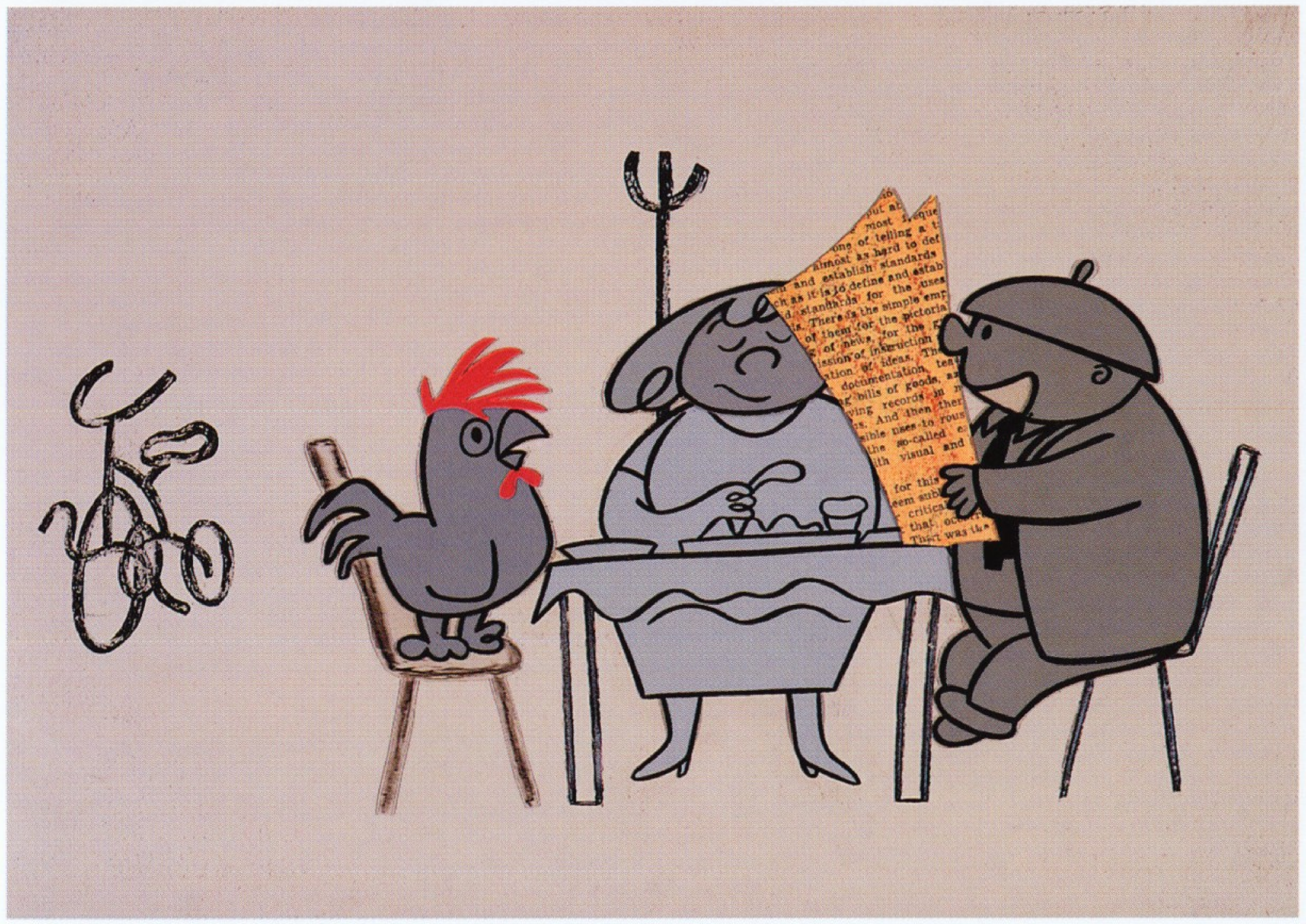


***Gerald McBoing Boing* (1951)**
Director: Bobe Cannon
Left: Production cels and backgrounds
Above: Model sheet drawing

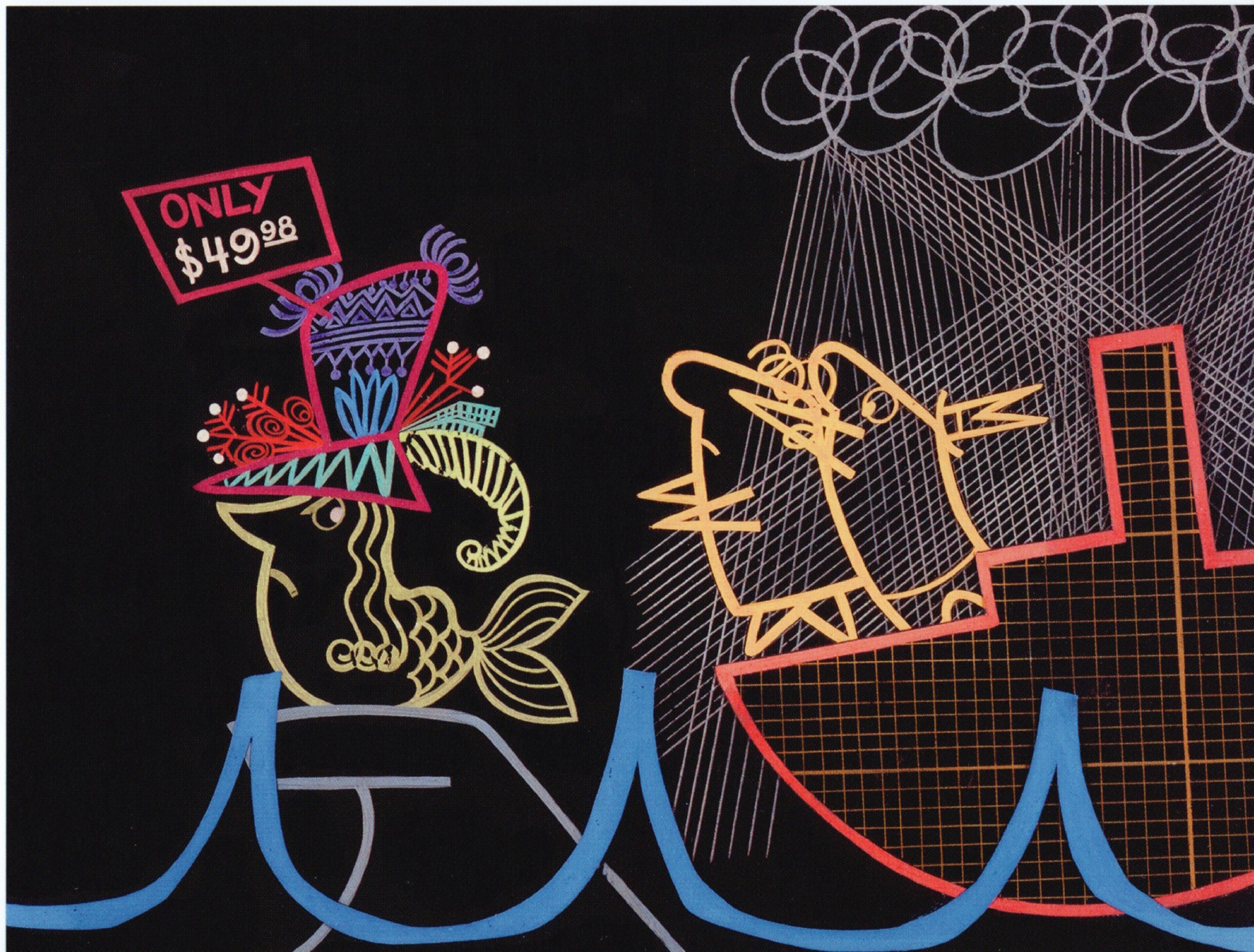
Gerald McBoing Boing. Bobe Cannon's *Gerald McBoing Boing* (1951), the story of a boy who can't speak words but goes "boing boing" instead, is in many ways the quintessential UPA film. In the words of *Time* magazine, it was "a clean break" from the Disney style of animation. The most striking aspect of the film is the utter simplicity of its production design. UPA cartoons up to that point had leaned toward the reductive, but none had been as confidently minimalist as *Gerald*. The objective of the film, according to its designer, Bill Hurtz, was to see "how elemental could it get? What can we get rid of? And through this restraint, [achieve] a kind of freedom." Hurtz continued:

> *We decided to dispense with all walls and floors and ground levels and skies and horizon lines . . . we used only furniture and objects to describe space and locale. Doorways, windows, chandeliers, rugs. . . . If you put a doorway in a room with no boundaries, way, way back, that's a vast hall, far more vast than if you added the walls and the ceiling; there's nothing to contain the space.*

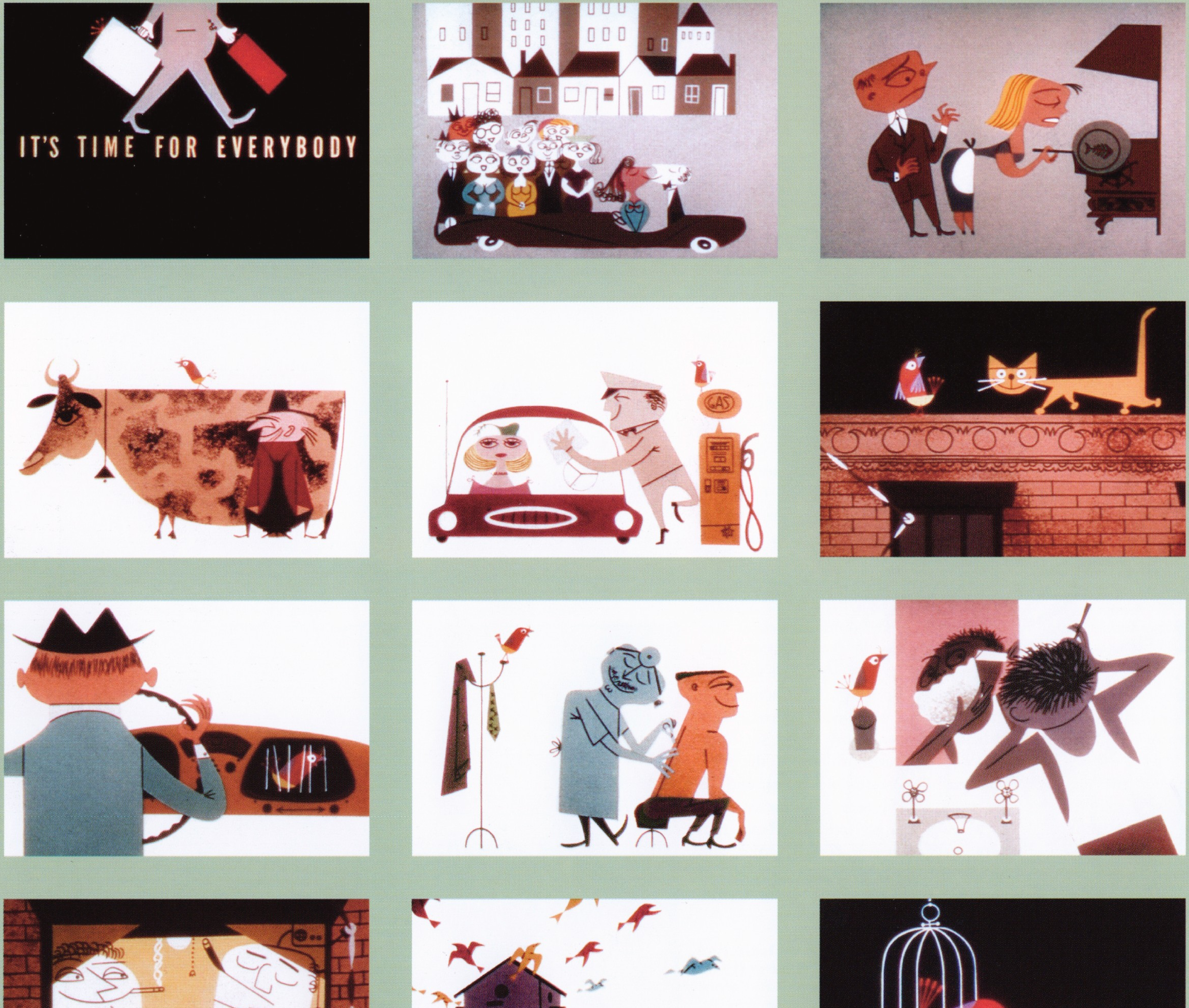
The film's color styling, by Jules Engel and Herb Klynn, is equally judicious. Individual colors flood entire scenes, applied flatly to both backgrounds and characters (Gerald's flesh tones change to reflect the primary color of each scene). The characters were designed collaboratively by storyman Phil Eastman, designer Bill Hurtz, and director Bobe Cannon. Following the "less is more" mantra, their designs are succinct and to the point—detailed enough to be expressive, yet nary an impertinent line. Cannon's stylized animation is the element that ties together the film's design. The animation implies stylization not only in how limited some of the movements are (such as characters who pop from one extreme pose to another with no in-between drawings) but also in how boldly Cannon breaks the conventions of human motion to achieve a purely invented style of movement. The most memorable example of Cannon's invented motion in the film occurs when Gerald is walking to school. In between every few steps of Gerald's walk, his character does a little hop. This expressive, yet seemingly inconsequential, bit of stylized animation conveys meaning far deeper than the action portrayed on screen. Painter Jules Engel explained it well when he said that the character's hop was "an abstraction perfectly expressive of [Gerald's] excitement and happiness—and syncopated, so that it adds a kind of musical rhythm to the overall design." The genius of Cannon and his crew was that they were able to create not only a beautifully stylized film, but a film where stylization—in design, color and animation—served a higher purpose of communicating emotional value to the audience.



Above: ***Christopher Crumpet* (1953)**
Director: Bobe Cannon
Production cel
and background

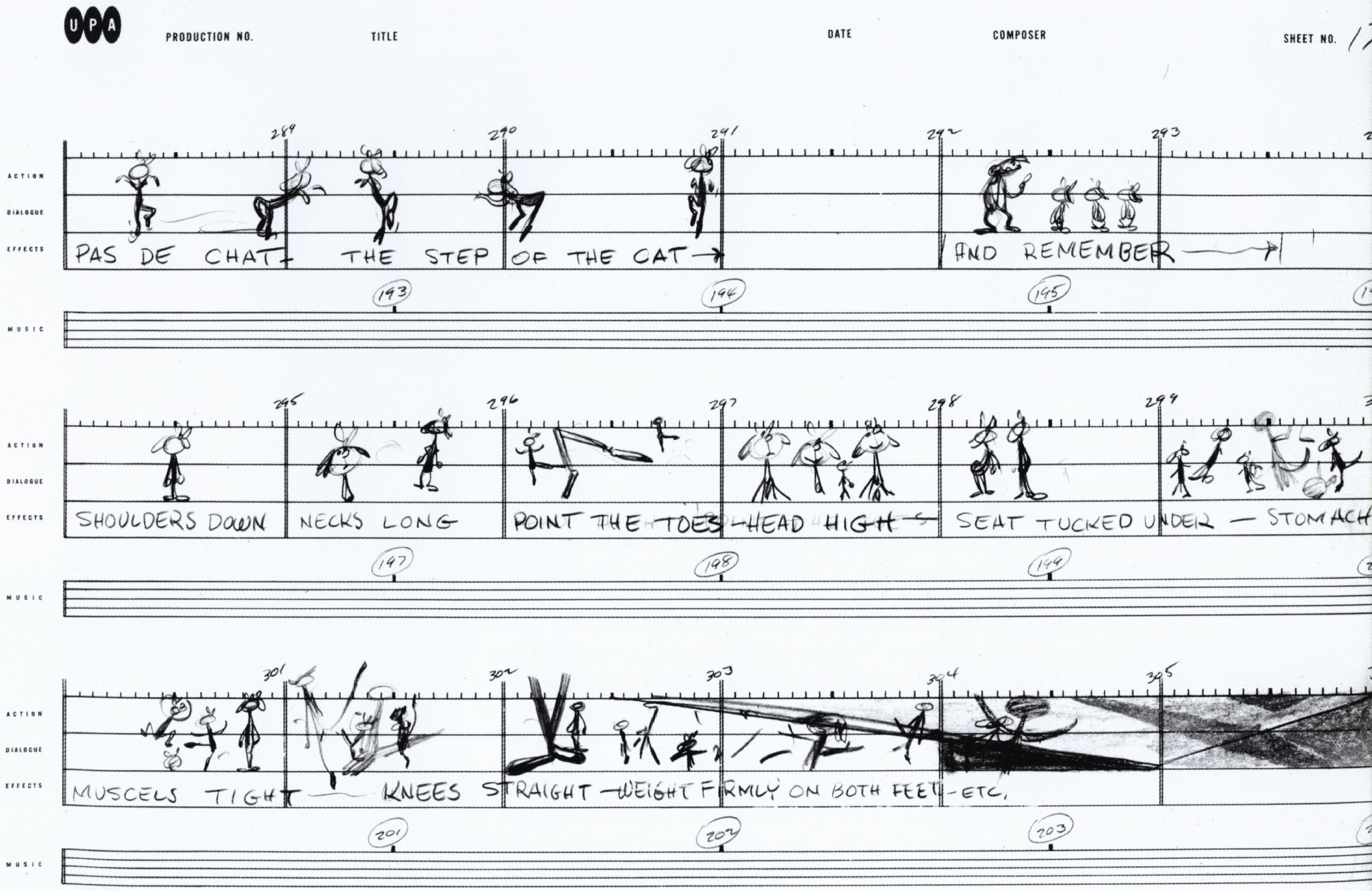


Right: ***Fudget's Budget* (1954)**
Director: Bobe Cannon
Production cel
and background



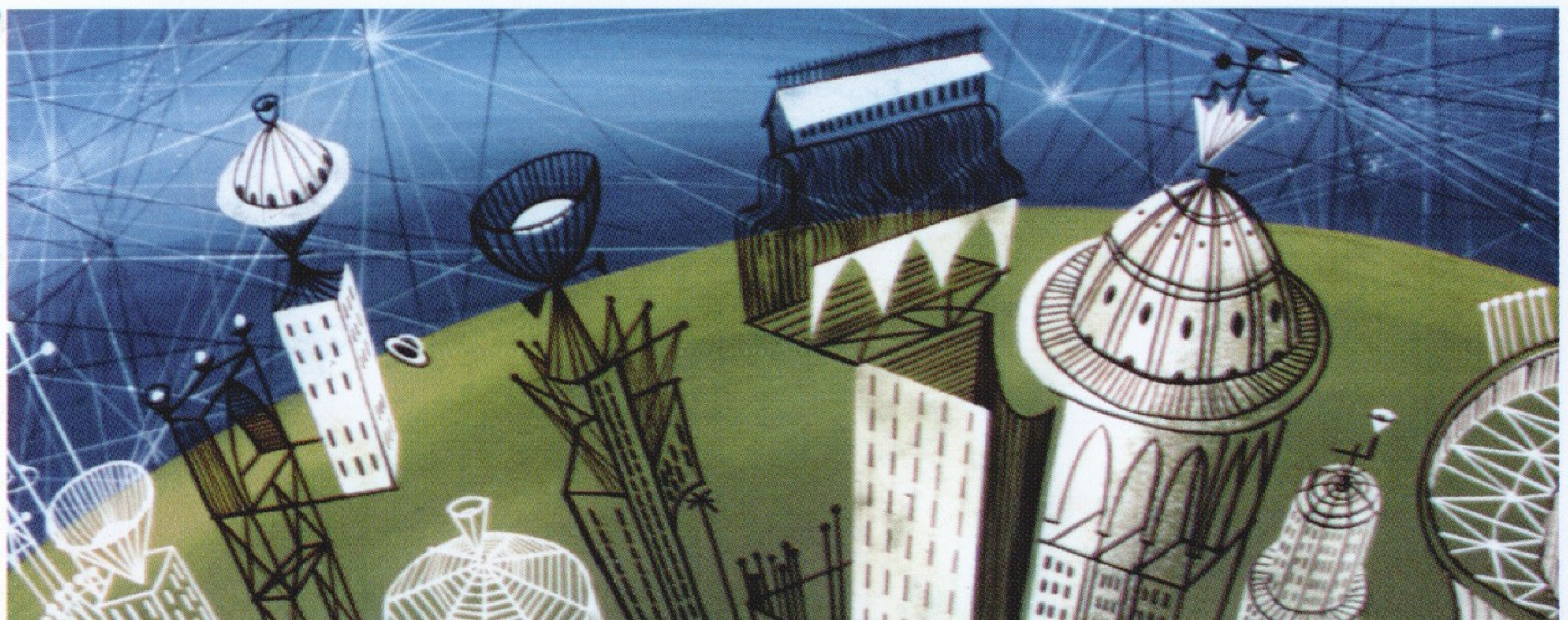
***It's Time For Everybody* (1953)**
Director: Bobe Cannon
Film stills

This fifteen-minute sales film for CBS Radio was designed by T. Hee and Sterling Sturtevant, with backgrounds painted by Bob McIntosh, Jules Engel, and Michi Kataoka. In 1954, Cannon directed a follow-up sales film for CBS Television called *Tune in Tomorrow*.


UPA
PRODUCTION NO.
TITLE
DATE
COMPOSER
SHEET NO.
ACTION
DIALOGUE
EFFECTS
MUSIC
289
290
291
292
293
PAS DE CHAT – THE STEP OF THE CAT →
AND REMEMBER →
193
194
195
295
296
297
298
299
SHOULDERS DOWN NECKS LONG POINT THE TOES – HEAD HIGH – SEAT TUCKED UNDER — STOMACH
197
198
199
301
302
303
304
305
MUSCELS TIGHT — KNEES STRAIGHT – WEIGHT FIRMLY ON BOTH FEET – ETC.
201
202
203

Ballet-Oop Timing Sheet

This bar sheet from *Ballet-Oop* (1954) illustrates the precise manner in which Bobe Cannon would plan the choreography and timing of his animated films. Each measure on the sheet represents one foot of film (or two-thirds of one second). Once he had planned the film to his own satisfaction, Cannon would create more detailed pose drawings and specific exposure-sheet timing to hand out to his animation crew.



***Gerald McBoing Boing on the Planet Moo* (1956)**
Director: Bobe Cannon
Film still

JOHN HUBLEY AND *ROOTY TOOT TOOT*

John Hubley, who was tied up with duties as the studio's supervising creative director, had not received an opportunity to direct any Columbia theatricals besides the graphically conservative Fox and Crow and Mister Magoo shorts. He finally found the perfect vehicle for a one-shot film in *Rooty Toot Toot,* a jazzed-up retelling of the turn-of-the-century American blues ballad about jilted lover Frankie and the man who done her wrong, Johnny. It would turn out to be the only one-shot Columbia film Hubley directed before he left UPA in May 1952. See the "Storyboard" section, page 89, for an explanation of why Hubley left UPA.

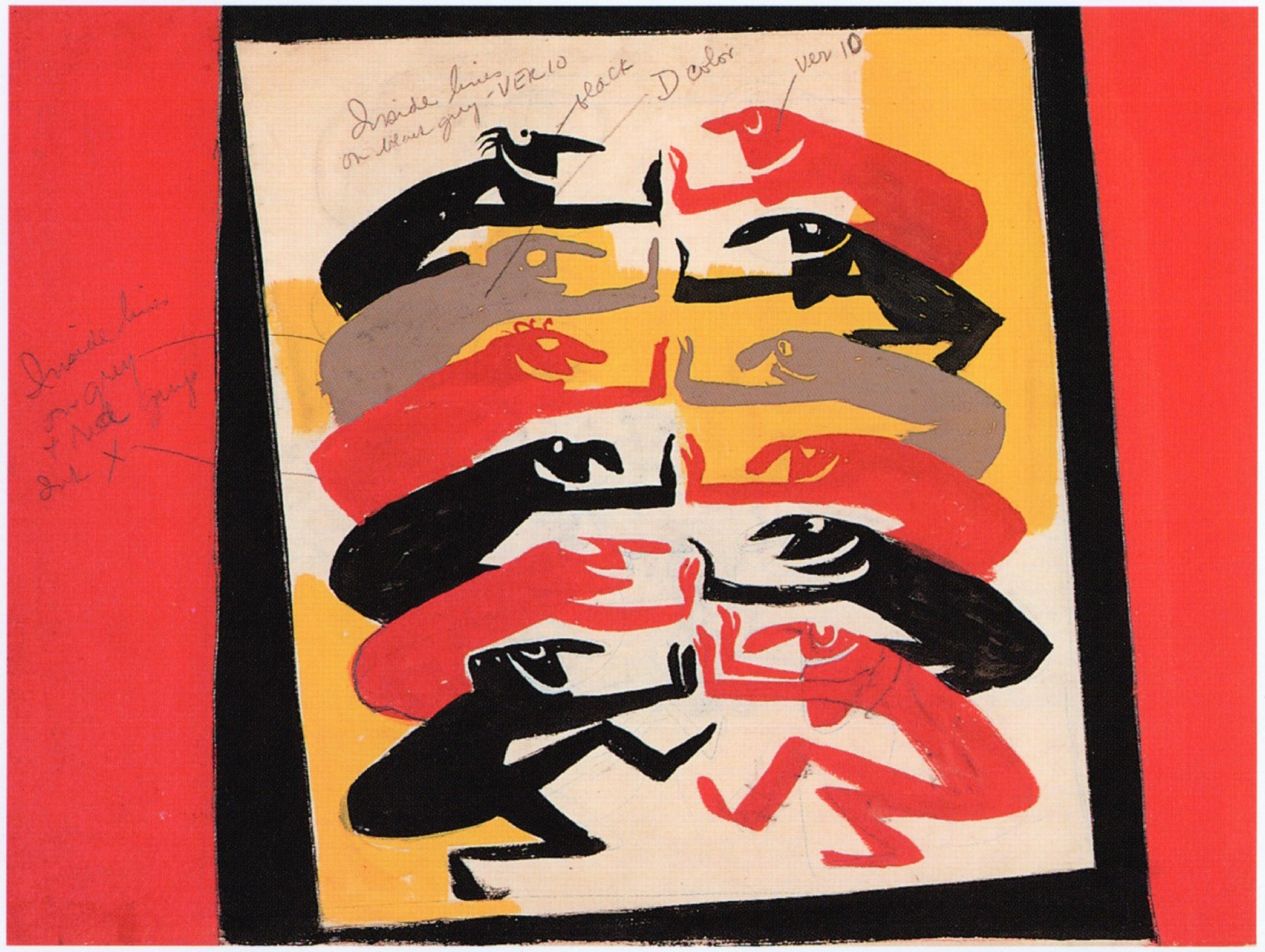
UPA's commitment to exploring a more stylized approach to animation and movement led Hubley to attempt much of this film's animation as an intricately choreographed dance. Animator Art Babbitt even requested that ballet dancer Olga Lunick be filmed as reference for the character of Frankie (Babbitt, however, didn't use the live-action reference to rotoscope the action—tracing off the movement frame-by-frame—but rather as a creative aid that inspired graphic shapes and gestural attitudes). It is difficult to find fault with the superbly executed animation in *Rooty Toot Toot,* but Hubley's closest collaborator on the film, Paul Julian, once complained that the highly stylized approach to movement was occasionally done purely for graphic effect and hindered the storytelling. Julian recounts a particular instance of this on *Rooty Toot Toot*:

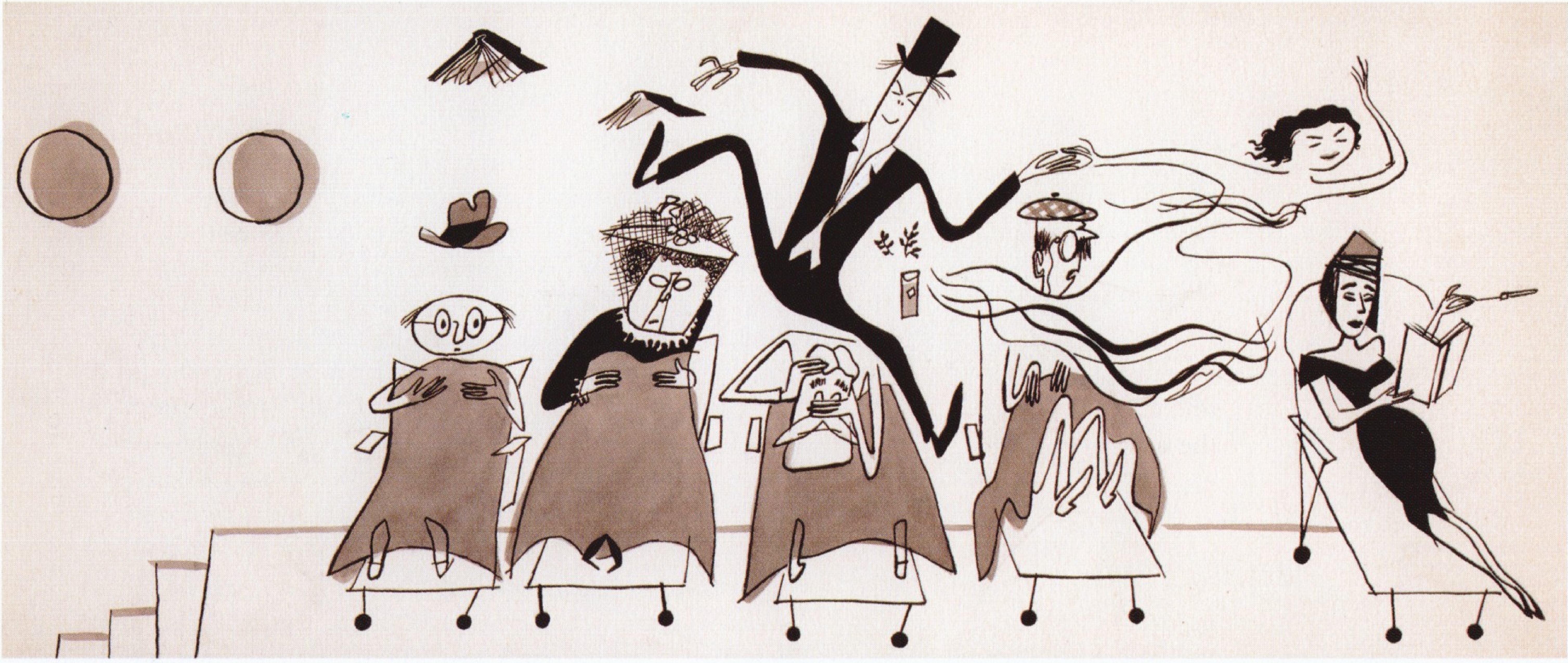
> *When the jury brought in its verdict of not guilty, [Hubley] went to a very stylized down-shot of the jury box, with the jurors doing some kind of a rhythmic dance. I gave him a considerable amount of argument about it. The picture lost me, right there. Some other pictures of his have lost me at about the same place in story construction. . . . He will fall back on a graphic premise even when it does not follow legitimately in the construction of the story.*

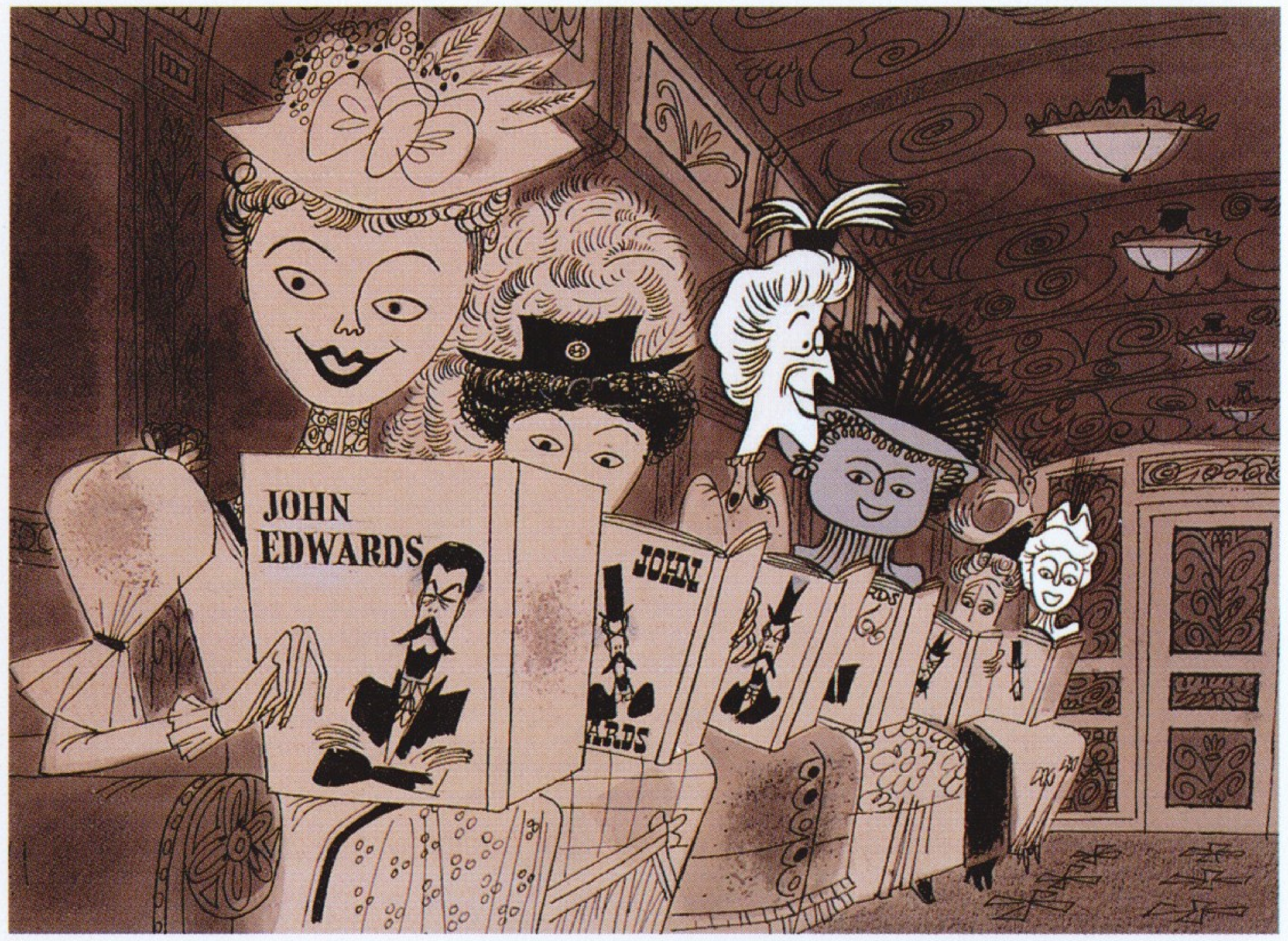
Considering the relentless visual inventiveness throughout *Rooty Toot Toot,* including Julian's own work, it's difficult to understand his objection to this particular scene toward the end of the film, but it drives home the idea of just how far artists like Hubley were pushing the visual boundaries of the medium. That it might come at the expense of storytelling on occasion was inevitable. Julian himself was responsible for designing and painting the film's backgrounds. His background design and color styling are spare and reductive, in the tradition of *Gerald McBoing Boing,* but Julian's backgrounds look far busier because of his ambitious use of textural effects. One of the textures that Julian used is simply achieved with a pen-and-ink line, squiggled into a densely packed Formica pattern. The other is a grubby paint texture that Julian explains was made with a corroded gelatin roller that had been chemically pitted and pocked. "I found that I could make textures with it that were like sponge textures and yet unlike sponge textures. I was using it for areas of half-tone, as a breakout from areas of basically flat color, and then working into this in line."

ROOTY TOOT TOOT (1952)
Director: John Hubley
Right: Color key by Hubley
Opposite: Production cel

Paul Julian vehemently disagreed with Hubley on this particular shot (right) in the film, arguing that the graphic concept detracted from the flow of the story.



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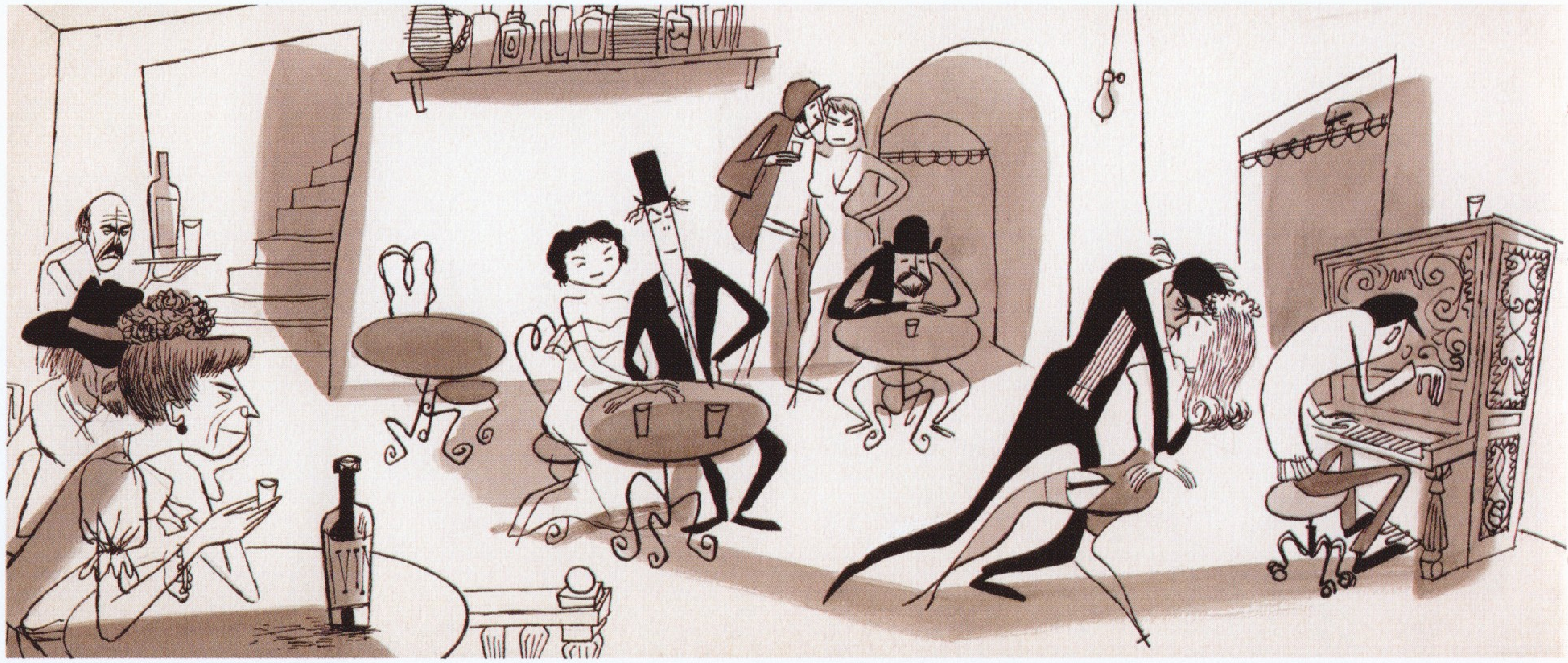
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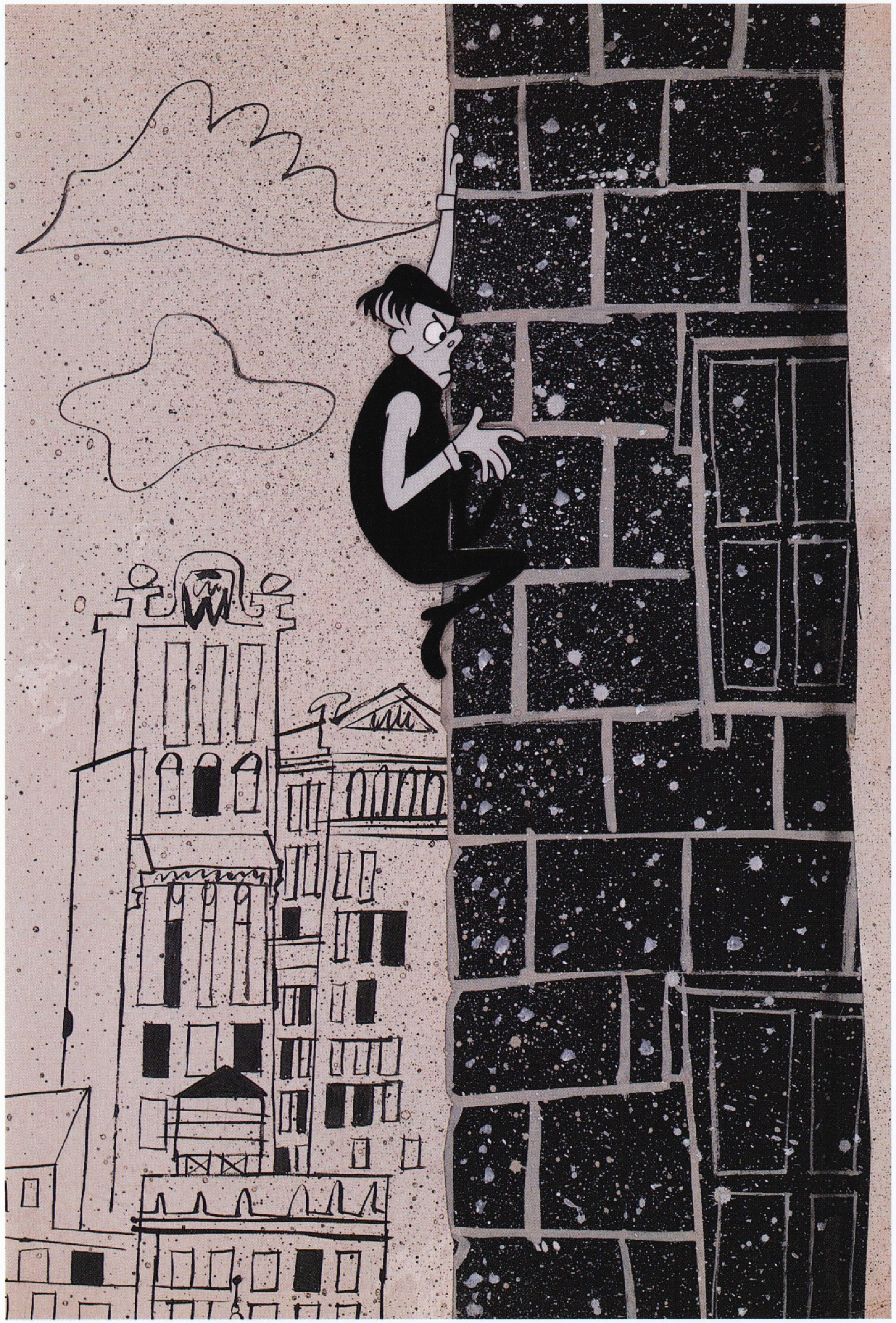
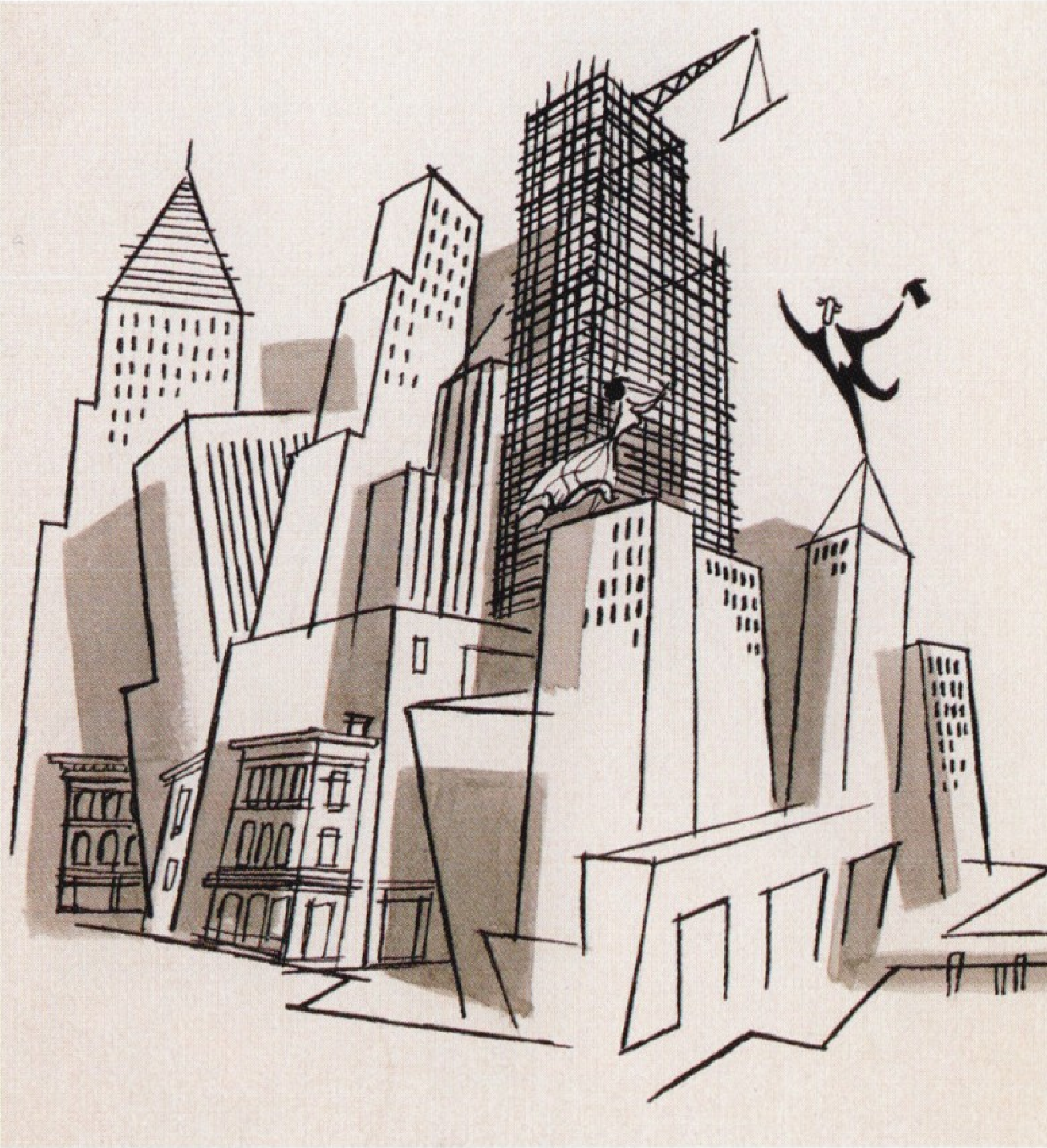


THE FOUR POSTER

Hubley followed up the success of *Rooty Toot Toot* by producing the opening titles and seven animated inserts for the live-action feature *The Four Poster*. The animated segments "were not so much counterparts as integrated parts of the story," Leonard Maltin wrote in *Of Mice and Magic*, "telling in a few moments of cartoon images about the passage of time or change in character between one live segment and the next." Though the animation was produced in black and white, there is a rich use of design and texture as well as the exploration of ambitious graphic concepts: a segment set during the Roaring Twenties uses character designs influenced by John Held Jr.; World War I is represented with an abstract composition of helmets, bayonets, and explosions. In one animated segment, when the characters travel to Paris, their ship sails into the distance while the Eiffel Tower walks forward toward the audience; beyond the inventive idea of having the Eiffel Tower walk on its "legs," Hubley's masterful ability to represent the ideas of space and distance in such an abstract manner was one of the elements that distinguished him from many other animation directors of the time.

The animation in this project seamlessly integrates the fluid dance-influenced animation of Art Babbitt (a continuation of his earlier work in *Rooty Toot Toot*) with a highly stylized type of animation that recalls Hubley's earlier work, especially the 1940s U.S. Navy flight safety films. Paul Julian, Bob Dranko, and Herb Klynn all contributed layout design and background paintings, but much of the film's distinctive design sense was derived from the etchy, line-driven concept art of Lew Keller (1912–1996), who had joined UPA after having worked as a designer for commercial studios like Shamus Culhane Productions and Ray Patin Productions. Keller's distinctive drawing style, recalled Bill Hurtz, was evident from the beginning of his career, in the late 1930s: "When he first came to Disney, he loved straight lines, and he had a hell of a time really getting the Disney touch. But . . . later on when Lew had more experience, it became a very strong kind of drawing."



THE FOUR POSTER (1952)
Animation director: John Hubley
Opposite bottom left and this page: Production cel and backgrounds
Opposite, top, and bottom right; and right: Concept art by Lew Keller

More than Meets the Eye

John Hubley's least known project at UPA is *More than Meets the Eye* (1952), a fourteen-minute sales film intended for advertising sponsors of CBS Radio. Hubley designed and storyboarded the film but handed off the direction to Bill Hurtz. UPA-NY creative director Gene Deitch remembers Hubley explaining the film's concept to him during a visit to New York:

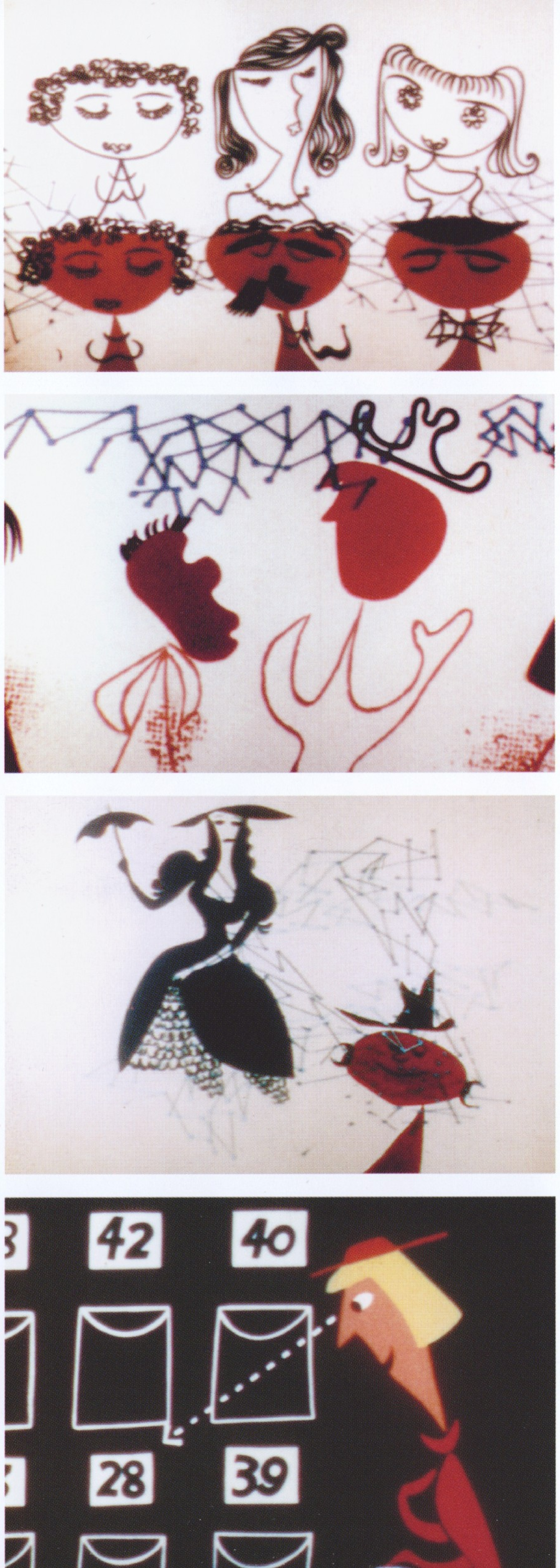
> *How can you use a powerful visual medium such as film, to sell a strictly audio medium? John had a brilliantly original idea: Suppose you have a camera, he said, that* visually photographs only sounds? *What you will see on the screen are only things defined by the sound they make, and only when they are making the sounds after which they vanish! . . . I thought it was a genius early attempt to sell the evocative quality of sounds!*

The finished film is not executed entirely using this concept, but there are a number of sequences where only sounds are "shown." For example, a man walking is represented visually only by his footsteps; when he leaves his house, only the slamming door is shown. The film looks completely unlike anything else UPA produced in the early 1950s. There is a strong modern art element with flickering textured backgrounds, very atypical animation character design, minimalist color styling, and the use of segmented figures (in one scene, a baby has no arms to connect his body and hands).

When the European graphic design publication *Graphis* did a profile on UPA in 1953, *More than Meets the Eye* was one of the films it chose to highlight:

> *The UPA ventured very far into the domain of abstract sign-language, compelled and inspired by the fact that sounds and words here took the place of objects. . . . In spite of the faults which are to be expected by a first attempt of this kind, the UPA has here furnished noteworthy proof of the general validity of the language used by contemporary art, and has done so with something as ordinary as a commercial film.*

The film's distinctive look also made it popular within the United States; in fact, CBS received so many requests for the film from business groups and civic organizations they were forced to hire an external film distribution company to handle print requests for this film.



More than Meets the Eye **(1952)**
Director: Bill Hurtz
Film stills

UPA-New York

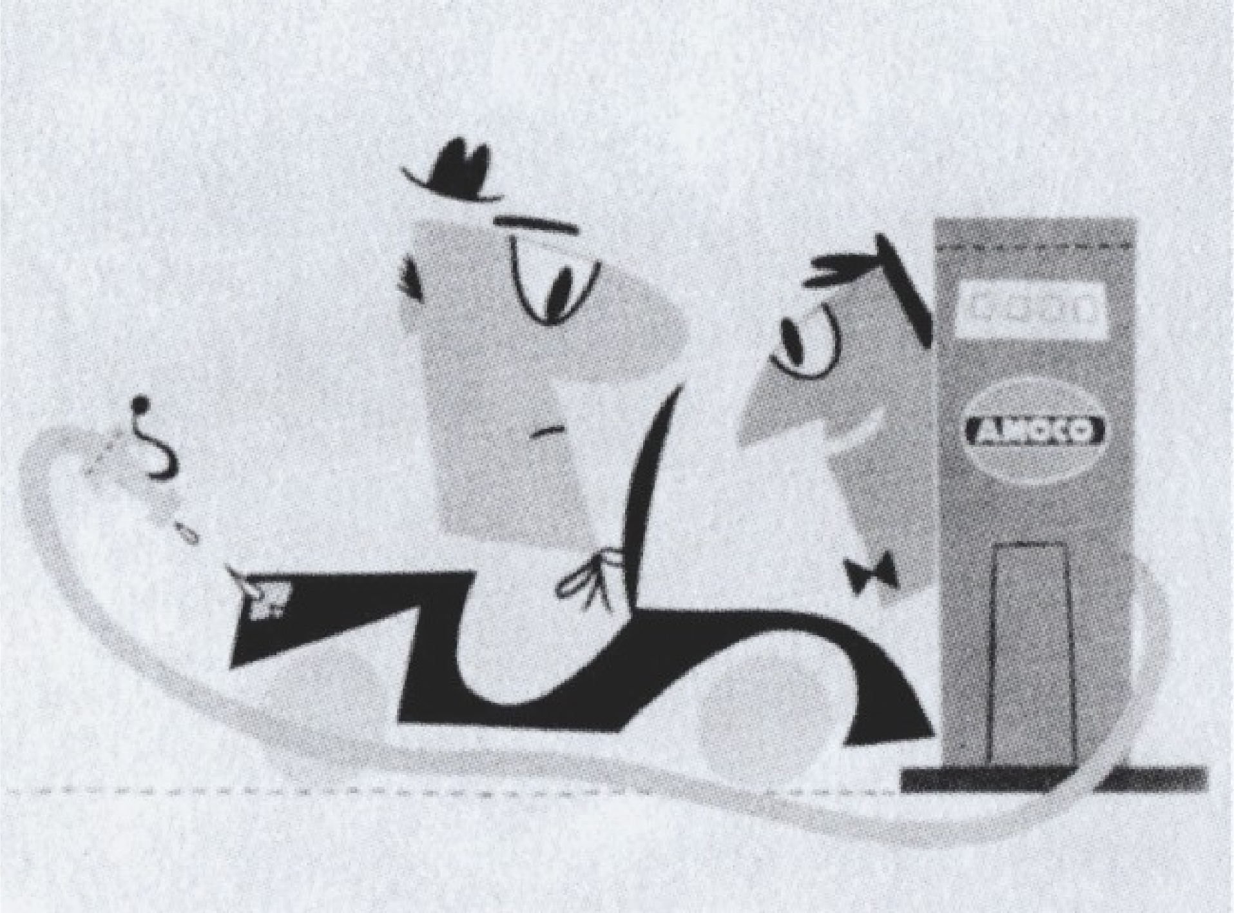
In 1950, UPA opened a New York branch to capitalize on the booming TV commercial market. The studio lasted until 1958, when UPA's faltering fortunes forced the closure of its East Coast branch. In its nine-year history, UPA-NY had four creative directors: Abe Liss, Gene Deitch, and the team of Jack Goodford and Chris Ishii.

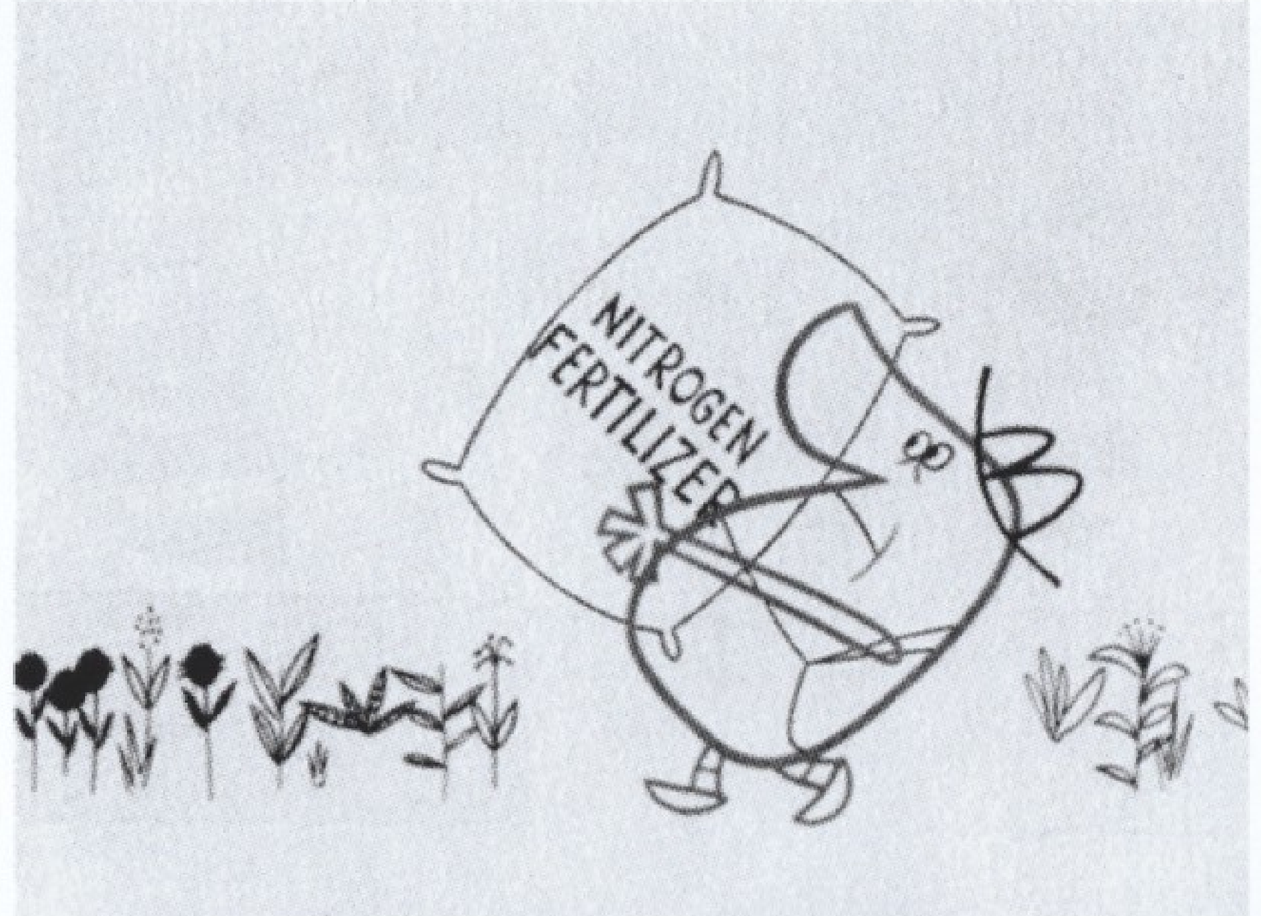
The studio produced hundreds of commercials, most famously the long-running "Bert & Harry Piel" spots for Piels Beer and a Jell-O Instant Pudding commercial designed by cartoonist Saul Steinberg. It also produced a handful of long-form films, most under the supervision of Deitch, such as *Pump Trouble* (1954), for the American Heart Association, and *I Had a Bird*, a short film for *The Boing Boing Show*. National Film Board of Canada (NFB) director George Dunning also worked briefly at UPA-NY before he was assigned to help establish the even shorter-lived London branch of UPA, which lasted two years (1956–1957). Dunning directed two shorts for *The Boing Boing Show: Quiet Town* and *Two by Two*. The studio also produced the final UPA theatrical short for Columbia, *Terror Faces Magoo* (1959), co-directed by Chris Ishii and Jack Goodford.

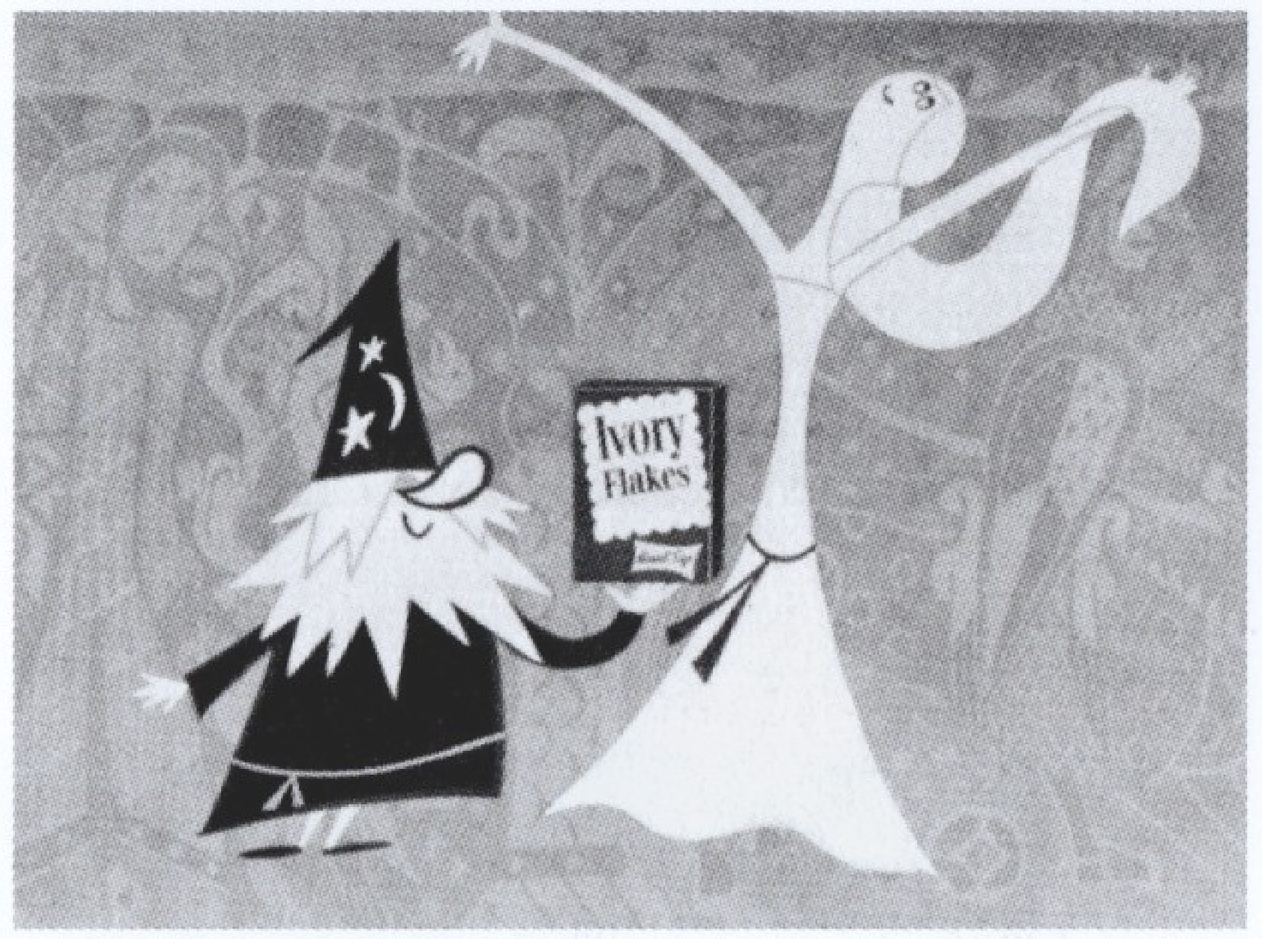
Another long-form UPA-NY effort was *Howdy Doody and His Magic Hat* (1954), a test film intended for the children's home-movie market, commissioned by the Kagran Corporation, producers of *The Howdy Doody Show*. The film was produced in paper-cutout style, a decision made largely as a result of the film's meager budget (fifteen thousand dollars). It was directed by Gene Deitch, designed by Cliff Roberts, and animated by Duane Crowther. Deitch recalls:

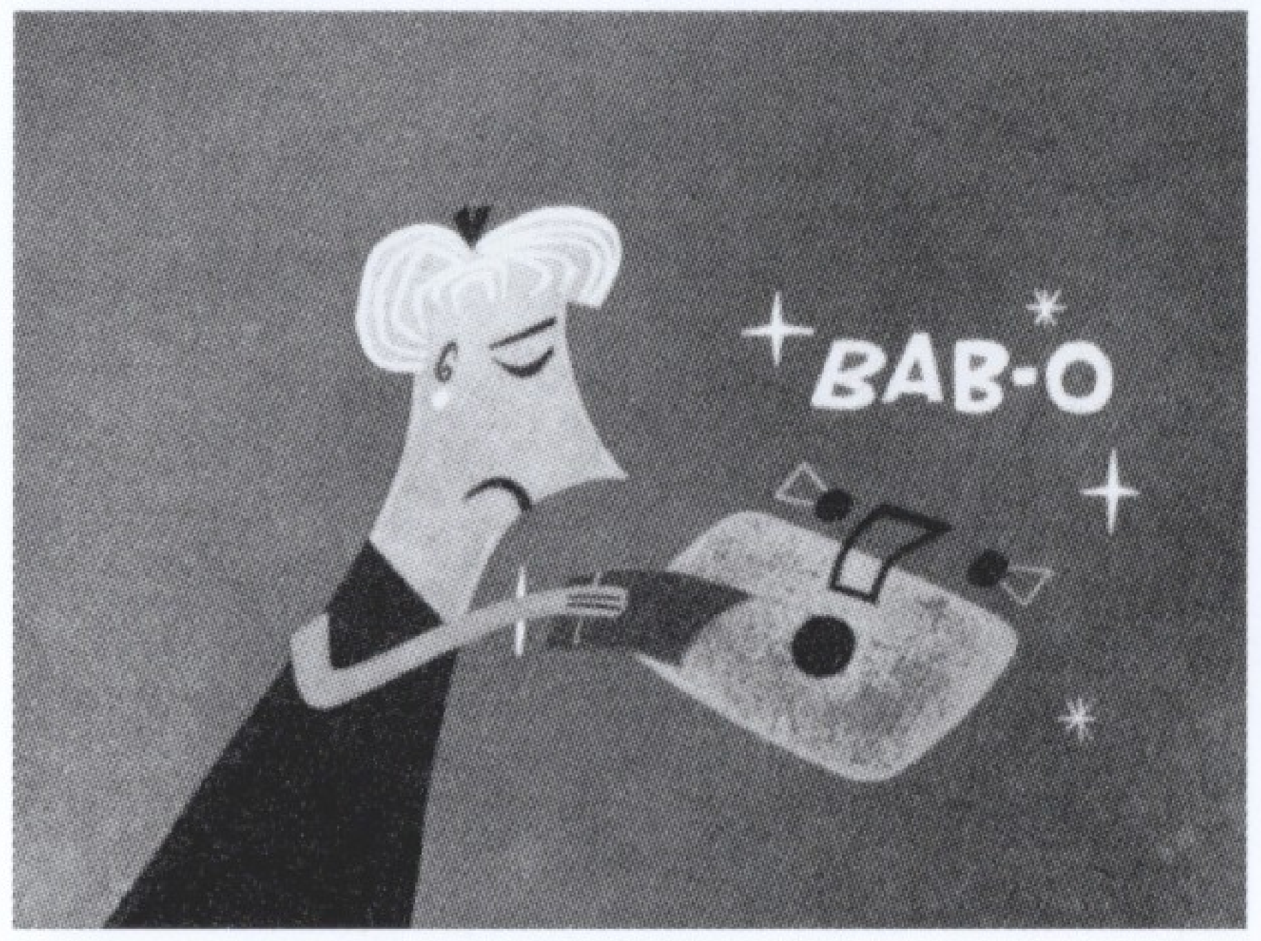
> *We reveled in the opportunity, while at the same time doing everything possible to make our film look as different as possible from what we all considered to be a grotesquely ugly puppet and an unspeakably cornball kids show. Cliff, Duane, and I gleefully subverted it and went all out to make it a true UPA film.*

The animator of the Howdy Doody film, Duane Crowther (1929–1998), is one of the unheralded natural animators of his generation. His UCLA student film of 1949, *Blum Blum*, displayed an intuitive understanding of animation movement and advanced cinema techniques. It offered him an instant entry into UPA's Burbank studio. Following his move to UPA-NY, Crowther became one of the top East Coast commercial animators in the 1950s, working at Robert Lawrence Productions and Elektra Films. He returned to Los Angeles in the 1960s, where he eventually opened his own studio, Duck Soup Productions, with Roger Chouinard.

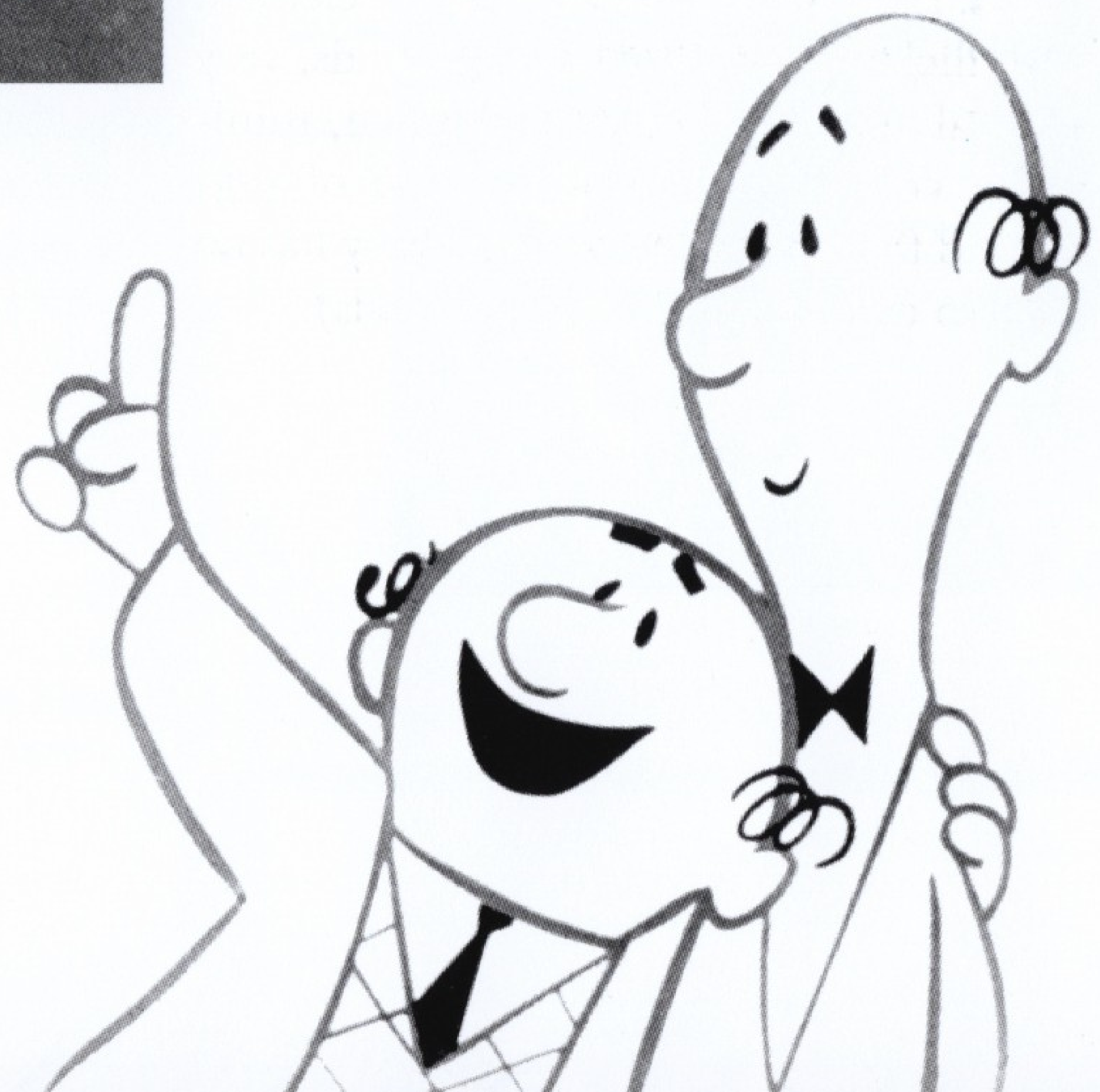






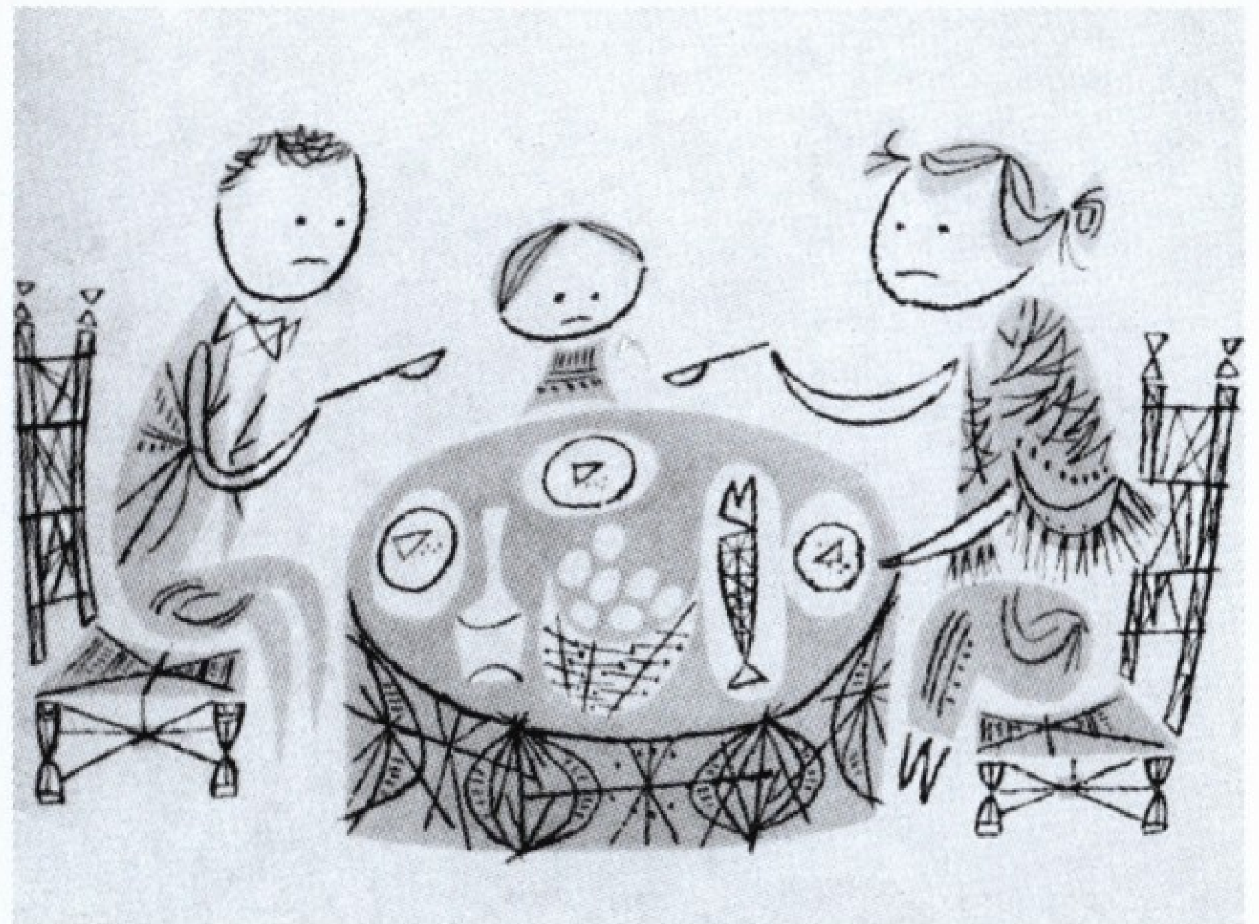


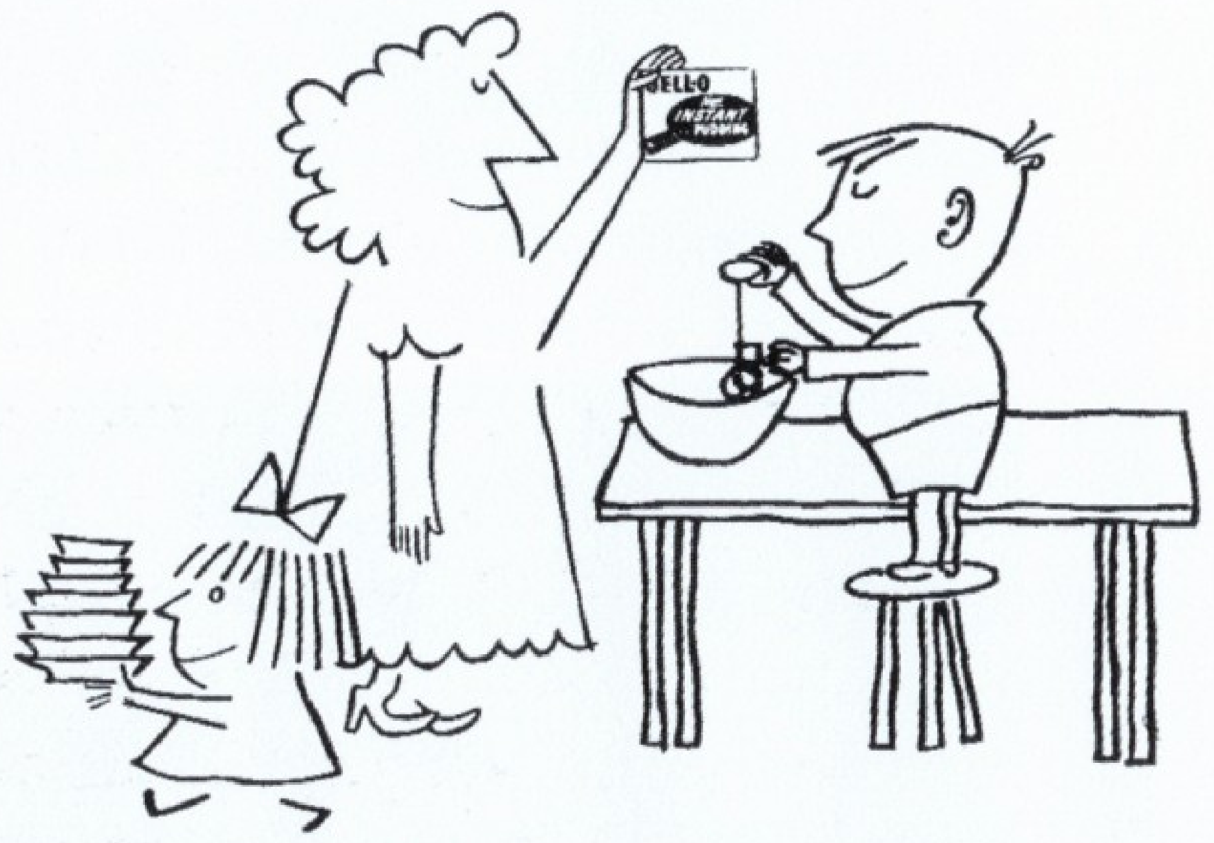
Top right: **Amoco Gasoline commercial**
Designer unknown
Middle left: **Arcadian Nitrogen Solution commercial**
Designer unknown
Middle right: **Ivory commercial**
Designer unknown
Bottom left: **Bab-O cleanser commercial**
Designer: Fred Crippen

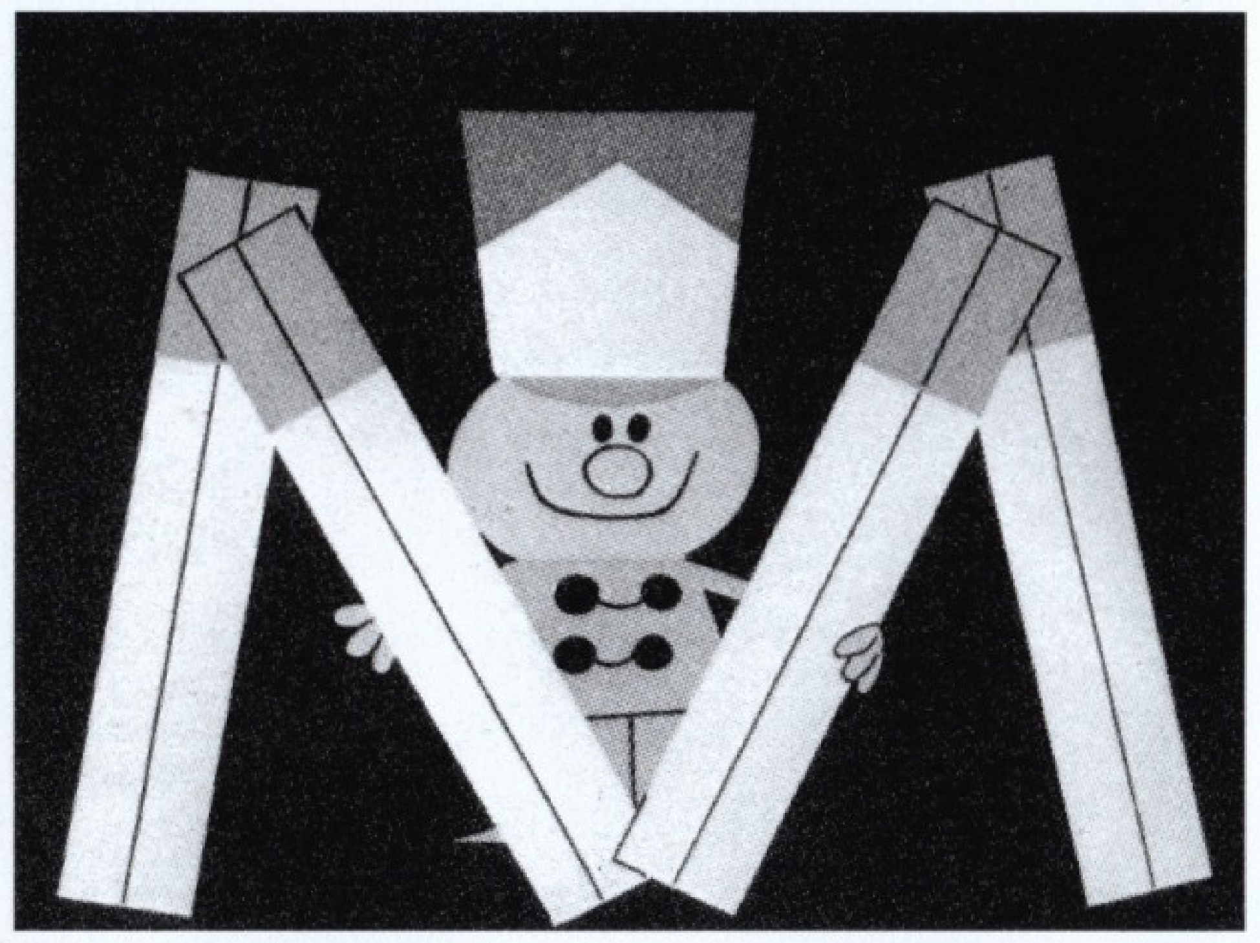


Piels Beer commercial
Designer: Jack Sidebotham

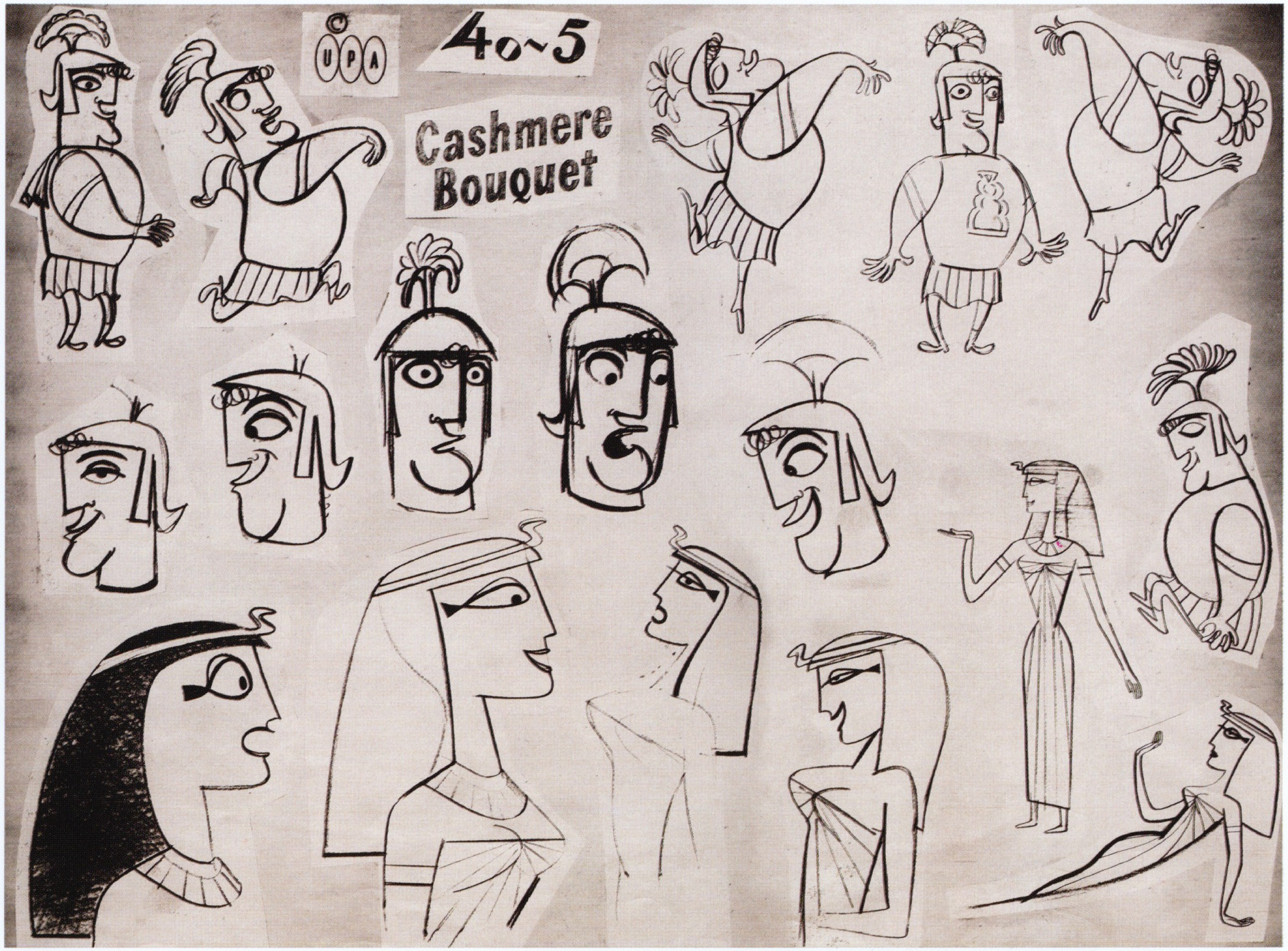
This Bert & Harry spot was directed by Gene Deitch and laid out by Chris Ishii.



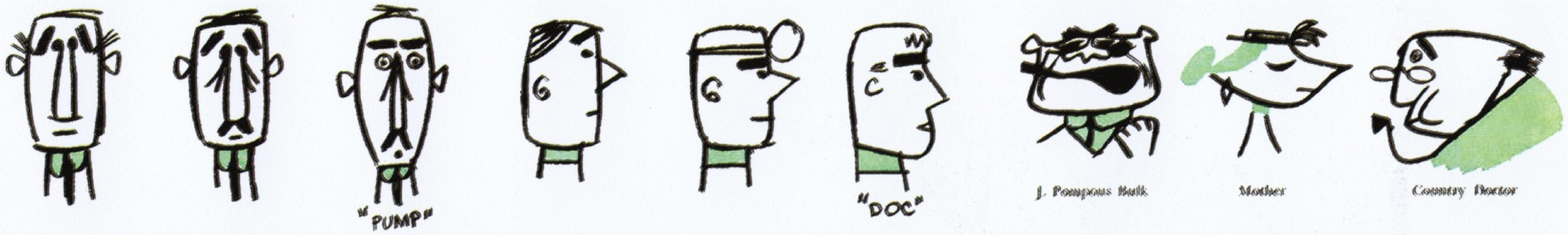


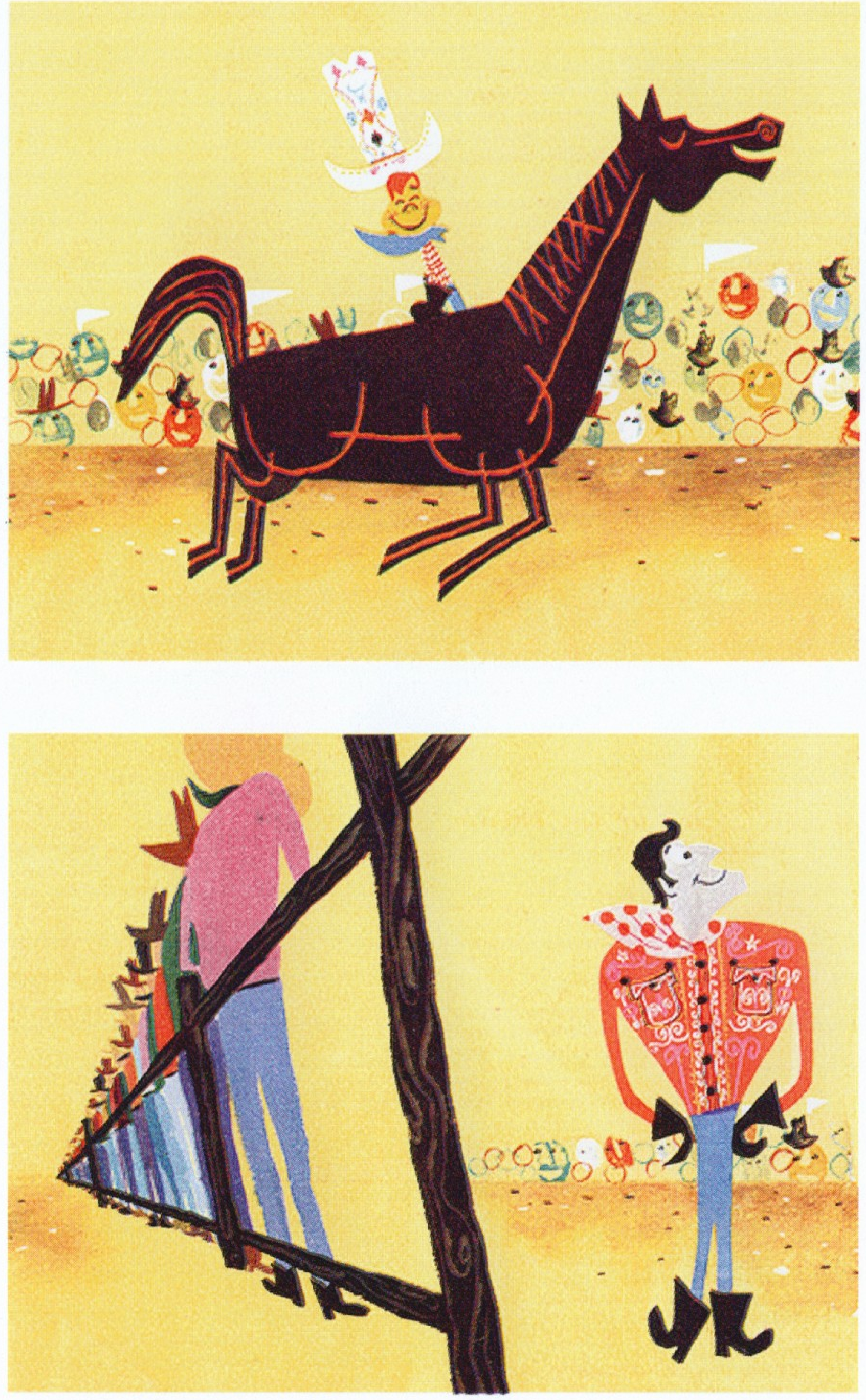


(from top to bottom)
United Jewish Appeal commercial
Designer: Chris Ishii
Jell-O Instant Pudding commercial
Designer: Saul Steinberg
Philip Morris commercial
Designer: Roy Morita



Cashmere Bouquet commercial
Designer unknown
Model sheet





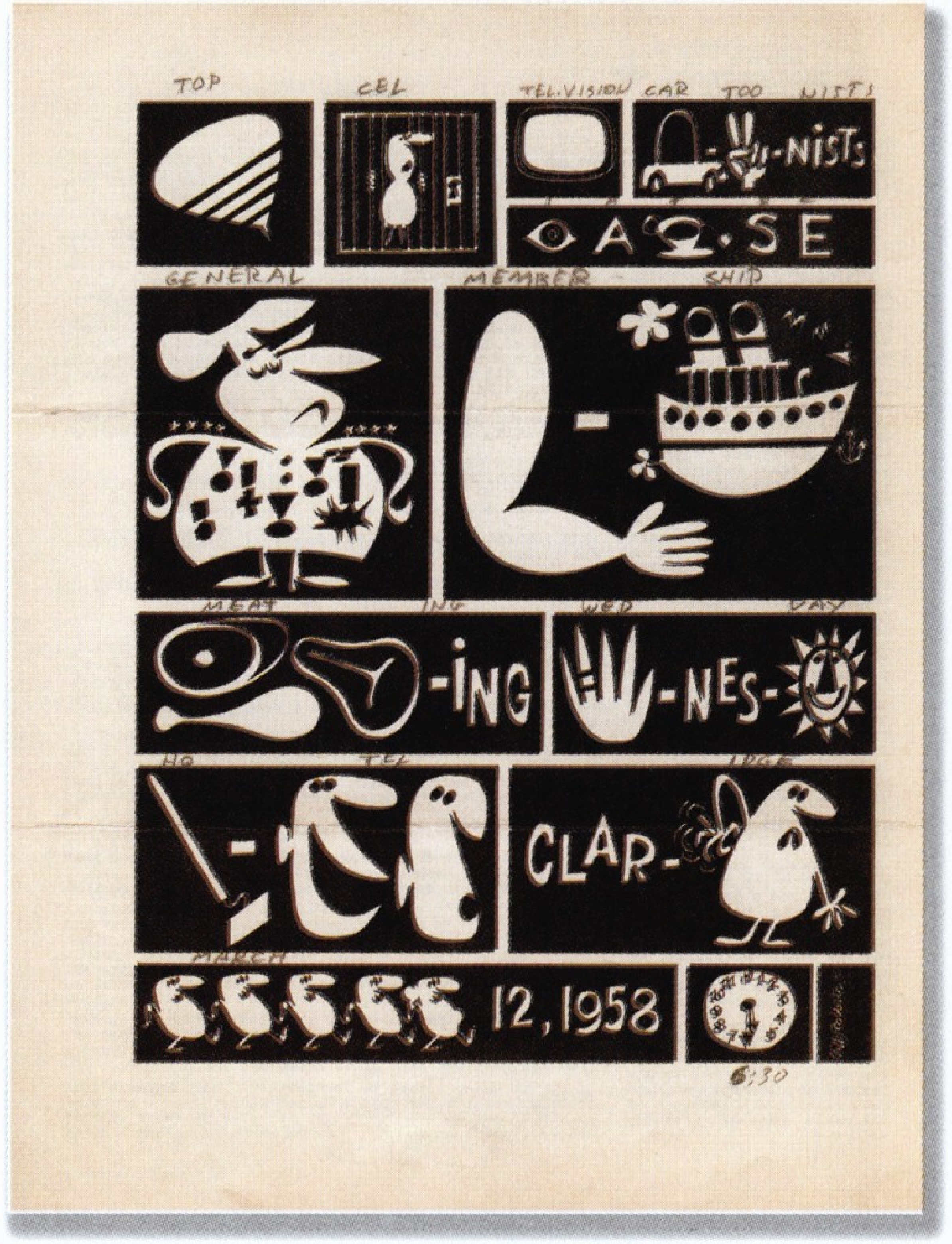
Top: ***Pump Trouble* (1954)**
Director: Gene Deitch
Model sheet by Cliff Roberts

Above: ***Howdy Doody and his Magic Hat* (1954)**
Director: Gene Deitch
Film stills

CLIFF ROBERTS

The extent of Cliff Roberts's formal art education came while attending Cass Technical High School in Detroit, which had a specialized curriculum for the artistically gifted. After graduation, Roberts (1929–1996) found work in a commercial art studio, where he began doing magazine illustrations for the *Ford Times*. He describes his style during this period as "'decorative' in the manner of Jan Balet, Jerome Snyder, Joe Kaufman and others of that time." Roberts received his introduction to animation in 1949, when he was hired by Gene Deitch to work at the Detroit industrial film studio Jam Handy Organization, where he painted backgrounds on the film *Building Friends for Business*. In 1950, Roberts moved to New York with the goal of becoming a "sophisticated Manhattan-based illustrator." Unable to find steady work, he began working in the slide film department of Transfilm. When Deitch left Detroit to become the head of UPA-NY, he hired Roberts as a designer-writer at UPA.

In short order, Roberts became one of New York's most in-demand designers during the 1950s and functioned in various roles—designer, writer, director—at studios such as Transfilm, Robert Lawrence Productions, and Elektra Films as well as freelancing for other studios, including Terrytoons, Lars Calonius, and Creative Arts Studio. Roberts also continued working as a freelance illustrator, notably illustrating *The First Book of Jazz*, by Langston Hughes, which was chosen as one of the 1955 *New York Times* "Ten Best Illustrated Books of the Year." Roberts's animation design strongly reflected his earlier commercial illustration roots, with his use of flat graphic shapes, highly abstracted character anatomy, and spare color palettes. He conceived a truly modern approach to character design in films like *Depth Study*, *I Had a Bird*, and *Stop Driving Us Crazy*, with characters who are designed out of very flat and rigid yet playful shapes rather than traditionally constructed squash-and-stretch cartoon forms.



A 1958 cover by Cliff Roberts for *Top Cel*, the newsletter of the New York animator's union.

The Boing Boing Show and Fred Crippen

> *The Boing Boing Show was tested as part of experimental tests, Tuesday evening, November 27th, 1956, before an audience of approximately 400 people. Audience reaction was quite negative. Before the film had run in its entirety, about 60 or 70 people out of the audience walked out of the show. Such a high "walk-out" is quite unusual. The highest we have ever had in the past has been about 10 or 12 people.*
>
> —Letter from Harry L. Smith Jr. at New York Radio-TV Research to Thomas Calhoun at the ad agency N. W. Ayer & Son

Such a decisively negative reaction couldn't have come as a complete shock to UPA head Stephen Bosustow and his crew. Earlier in 1956, *The Boing Boing Show*'s executive producer, Bobe Cannon, had brought aboard former UPA storyman Bill Scott to serve as "story supervisor" on the series. Scott explained the reason for his return:

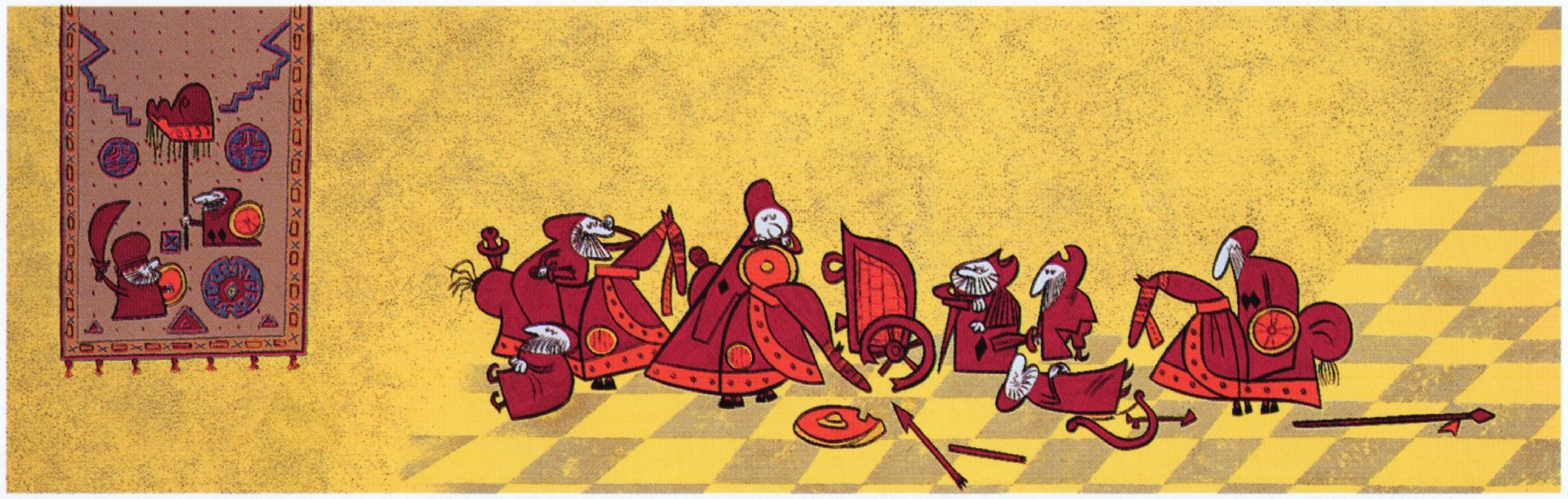
> *They'd got about halfway through this enormous enterprise, and suddenly someone realized that nothing was funny. You see, everything was very artistic and the graphics were sensational, but there were no jokes! . . . I had to try to inject some humor, some point of view, or some satire into the stuff.*

The Boing Boing Show ran on CBS from December 16, 1956, through March 10, 1957. It was a voyage into uncharted territory for CBS, marking the first original animated series by one of the "Big Three" networks (ABC, CBS, and NBC). The marriage of UPA and the "Tiffany Network" couldn't have been more ideal; during the 1950s, CBS placed almost as high a premium on quality design as UPA. The network's director of on-air graphic design, Georg Olden, and the network's director of print and promotional advertising, William Golden (also responsible for the CBS eye logo), were both innovators in the design field whose work for CBS was regularly celebrated in design publications of the day.

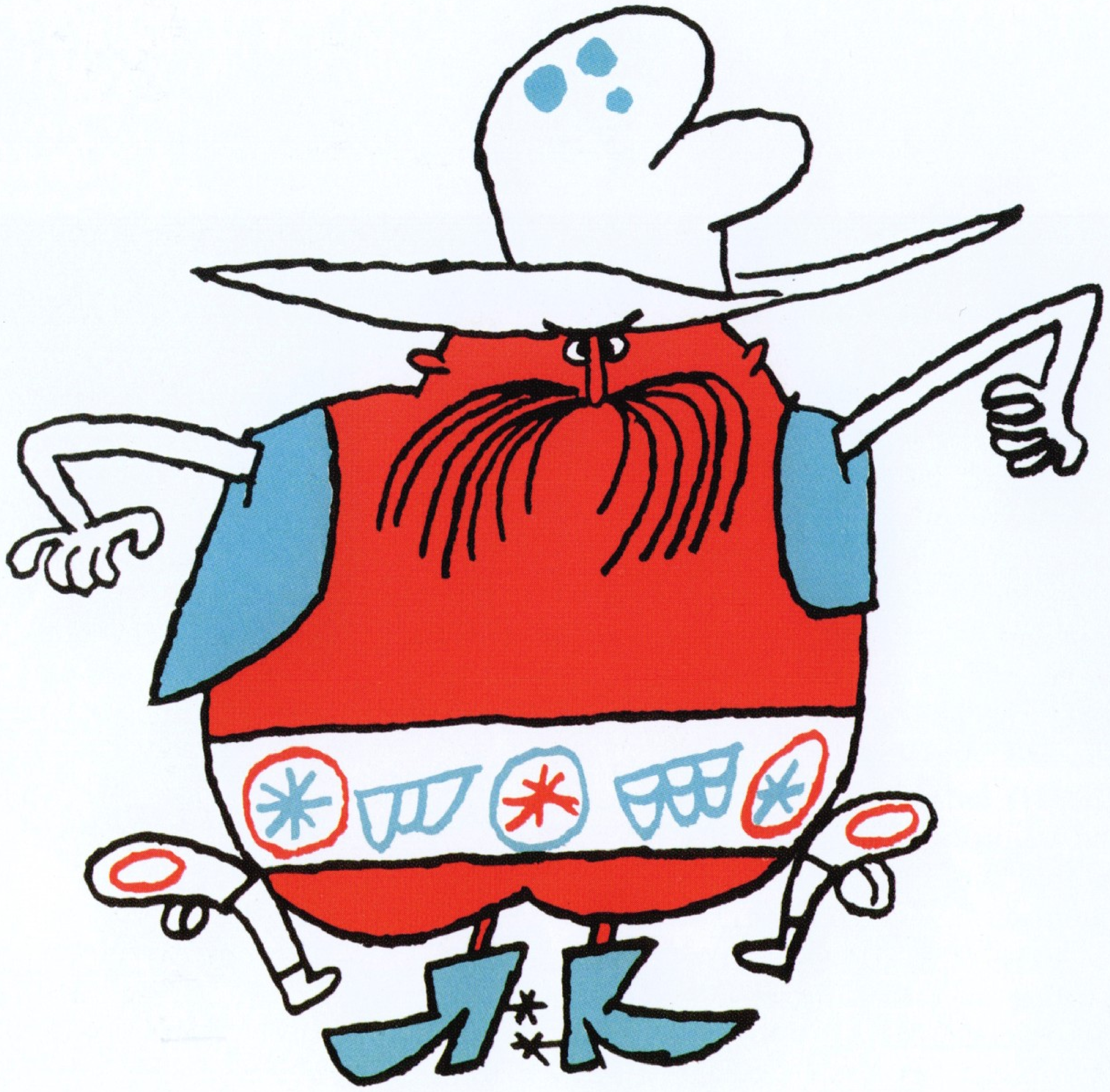
The show also provided UPA a much-needed creative shot in the arm. By 1955, the studio's theatrical schedule was composed nearly entirely of Mister Magoo shorts. Now, UPA would have to produce seventy-five new shorts in eighteen months, a monumental assignment for a studio that had been making less than a dozen theatrical shorts annually. Complicating matters was the fact that the shorts had very few recurring characters, and each film required original designs. The show's namesake, Gerald McBoing Boing, served as an animated MC who introduced the shorts, but never appeared in any of the actual shorts. UPA met the challenge head-on, embarking on an unprecedented recruitment effort. Dozens of new faces started arriving at the studio to work on the TV series—experimental filmmakers like John Whitney and Sidney Peterson; animation veterans such as Aurelius Battaglia, George Dunning, Ed Levitt, and Rod Scribner; and many young art school students, including Jimmy Murakami, Dolores Cannata, Roy Morita, Harry Hess, Mordi Gerstein, Dave Weidman, and Ervin Kaplan.

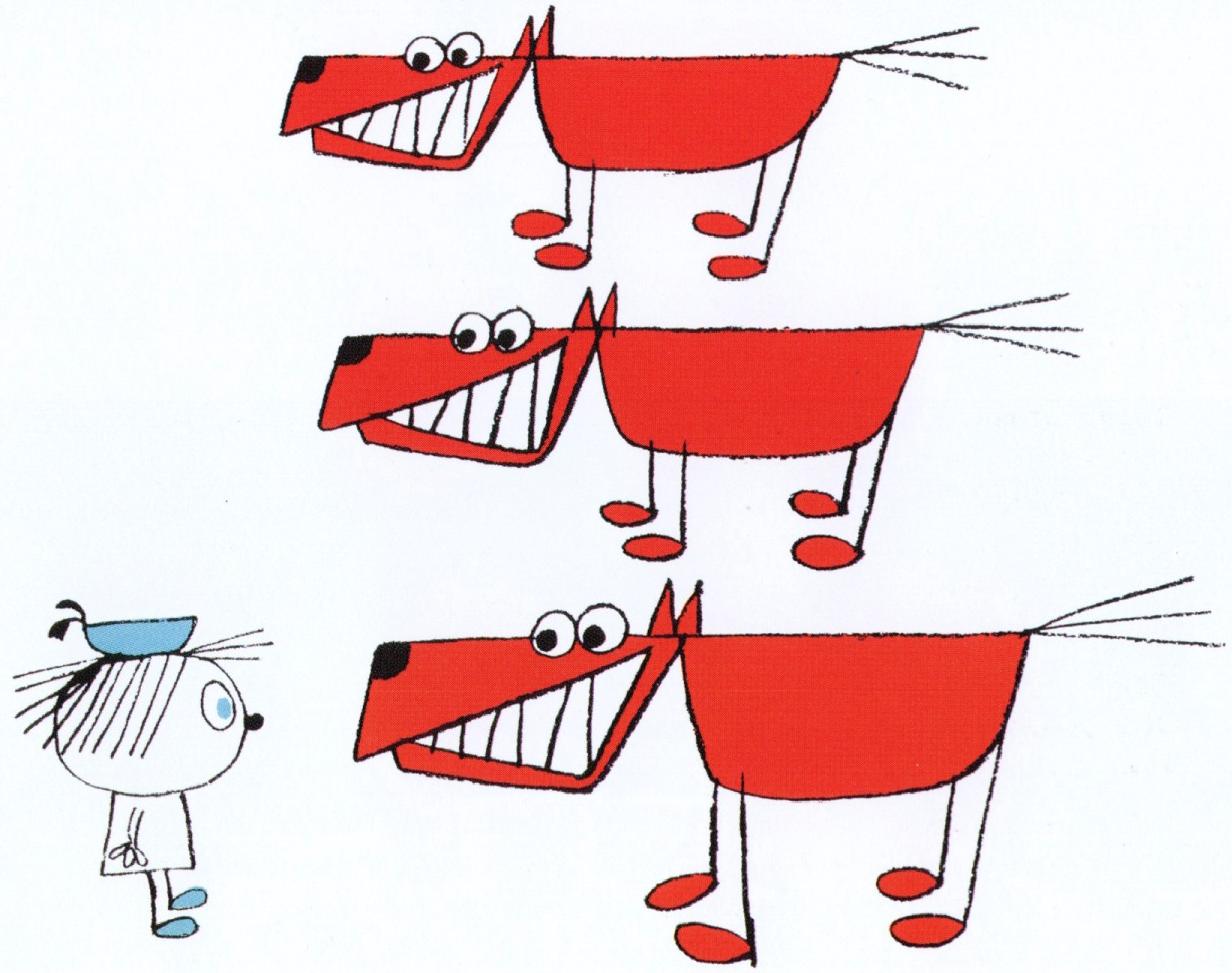
CBS held such high hopes for the series that it took out a seven-year option on the show, in addition to the twenty-six episodes commissioned for the first season. They entrusted UPA with the content of the show and gave the studio creative carte blanche from start to finish. What CBS hadn't anticipated was that the show would run wildly over budget, costing the hefty sum of $31,000 per half-hour episode, a figure that was equal to some of the era's one-hour live-action drama series. As a result, the show was unable to find a sponsor, and it holds the dubious distinction of being one of the few major TV series of the era that went over the air without a sponsor.

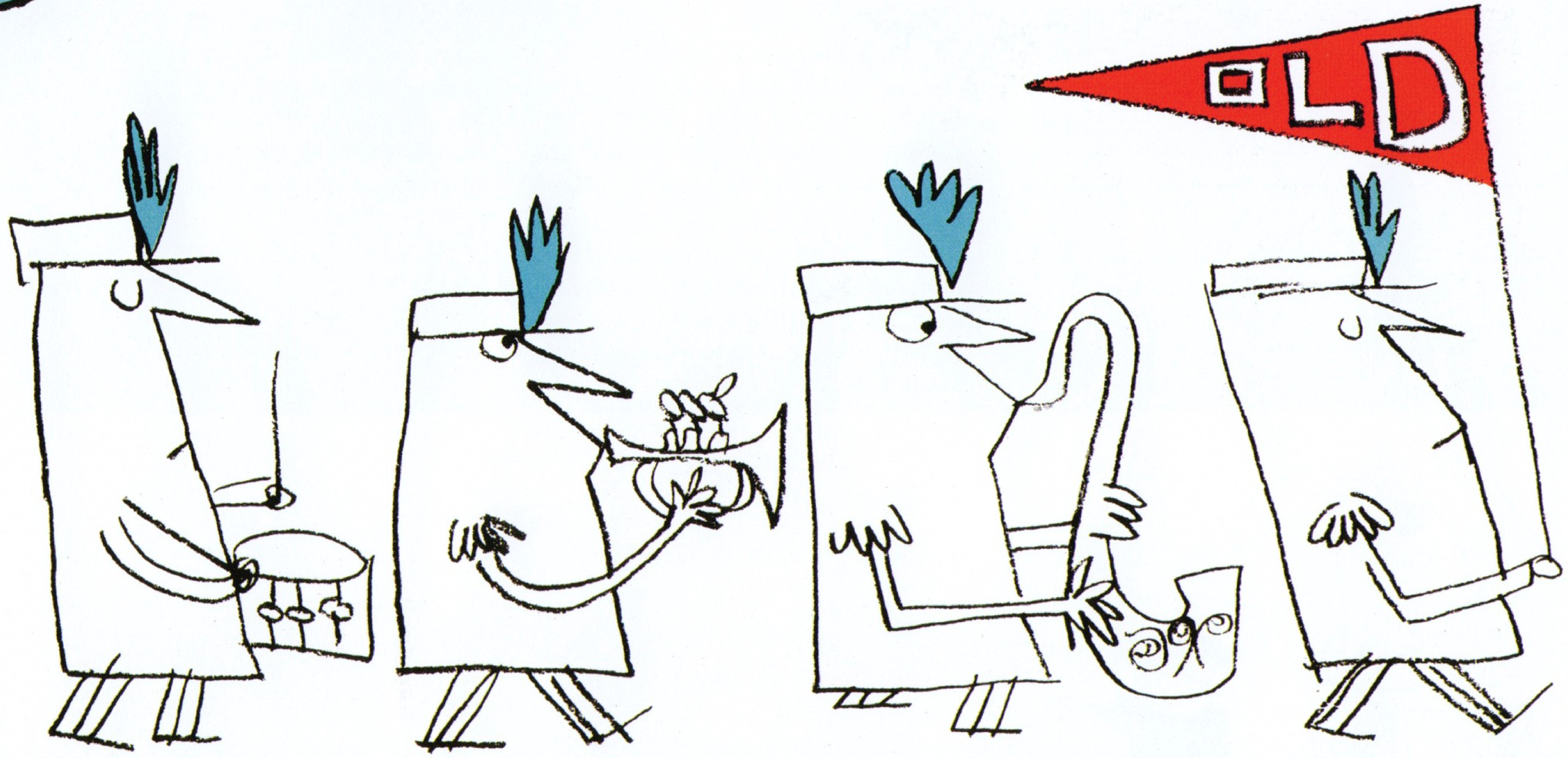
The resulting cartoons, produced between 1955 and 1956, were wildly uneven in terms of entertainment value but fascinating for the sheer variety of artistic styles used. Battaglia's shorts, like *The Invisible Moustache of Raoul Dufy* and *The Beanstalk Trial*, had the delightful look of children's book illustrations with minimal animation; Scribner's three shorts, on the other hand—*One Wonderful Girl*, *The Lost Duchess*, and *The Armored Car*—were among the most fully animated entries in the series. Dunning produced two memorable films—the cutout style of *Quiet Town* harkened back to the many cutout films he had produced at the NFB, while the highly abstract *Two by Two* was reminiscent of another of his NFB shorts, *Grim Pastures* (1943). Designer T. Hee directed *The Trojan Horse* and *We Saw Sea Serpents*, which spoofed Walter Cronkite's CBS series *You Are There*, combining cel animation with cutouts of live-action people. The six Dusty of the Circus shorts directed by Gerry Ray and Alan Zaslove were based on a 1949 UPA TV pilot directed by John Hubley and designed by Gene Deitch. The incredible demand for cartoons provided the opportunity for a lot of animators to move into the director's seat, and the results included some fine cartoons by first-time directors, including Alan Zaslove's *The Day of the Fox*, Osmond Evans's *The Outlaws* and *Der Team from Zwischendorf*, and Lew Keller's *Miserable Pack of Wolves*. The show gave similar free reign to young designers who received the opportunity to design their own shorts. These designers included Dolores Cannata, who designed *The Trial of Zelda Belle* and *Just Believe in Make-Believe*, Roy Morita (*Outlaws*, *Der Team from Zwischendorf*), Charleen Peterson (*Persistent Mr. Fulton*), Norm Gottfredson (*The Day of the Fox*,



***The King and Joe* (1956)**
Director unknown
Background painting by
Ervin Kaplan







Above left: ***Outlaws*** **(1956)**
Director: Osmond Evans
Above right: ***Miserable Pack of Wolves*** **(1956)**
Director: Lew Keller
Bottom: ***Fight On for Old*** **(1956)**
Director: Ernest Pintoff

The Freezee Yum Story) and Jimmy Murakami (*The Matador and the Troubador*).

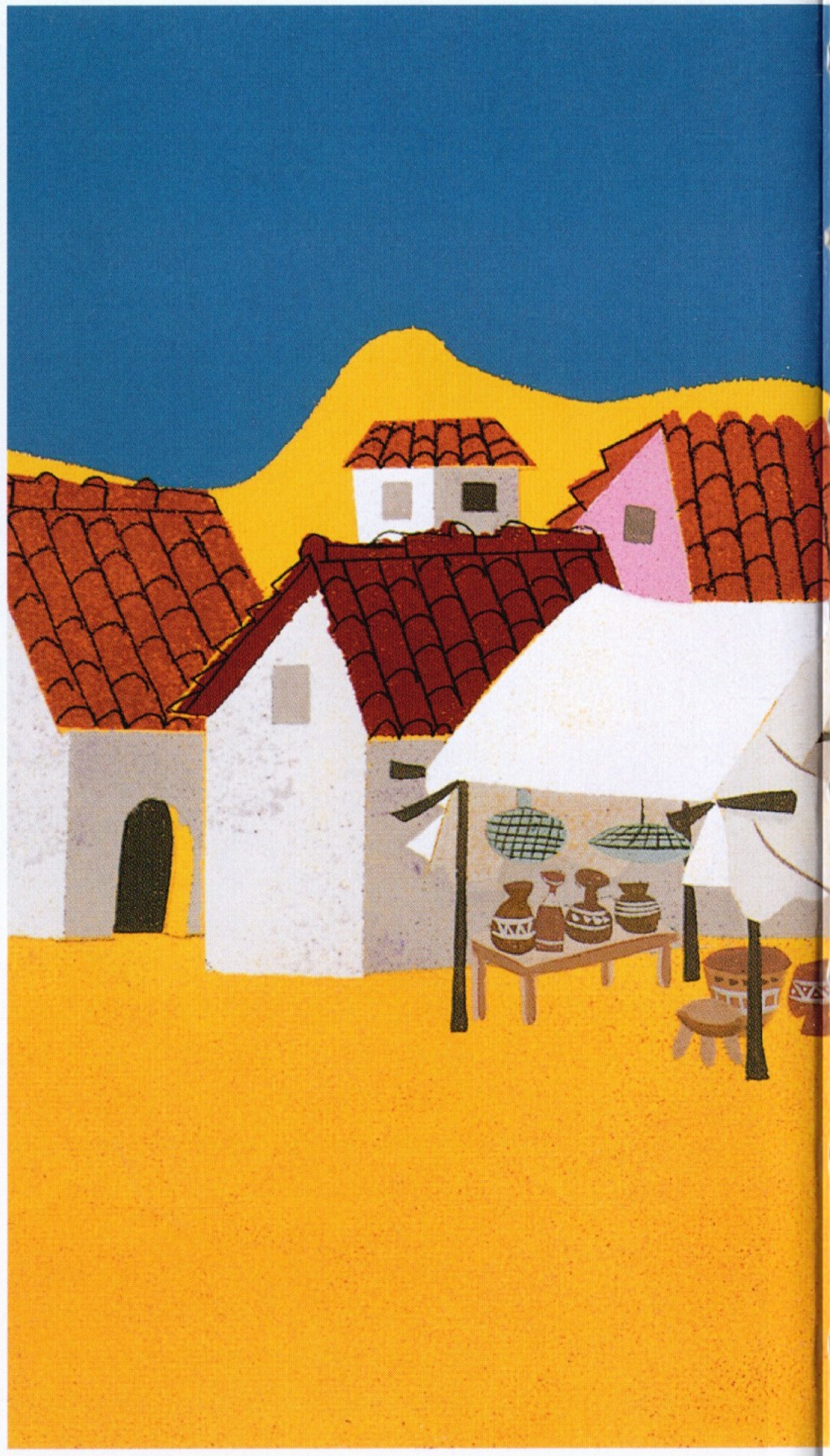
When the show premiered in 1956, it was an instant hit with TV critics, who appreciated the artistry in the generally artless medium of 1950s television, but audiences were unable to understand UPA's visual eclecticism, which came quite often at the expense of storytelling, humor, and characterization. An acquaintance of Stephen Bosustow offered another perspective when he told the UPA boss that *The Boing Boing Show* was "a little like the automobile designer who brings out the dream car too soon, before the public has evolved a taste which will accept it."

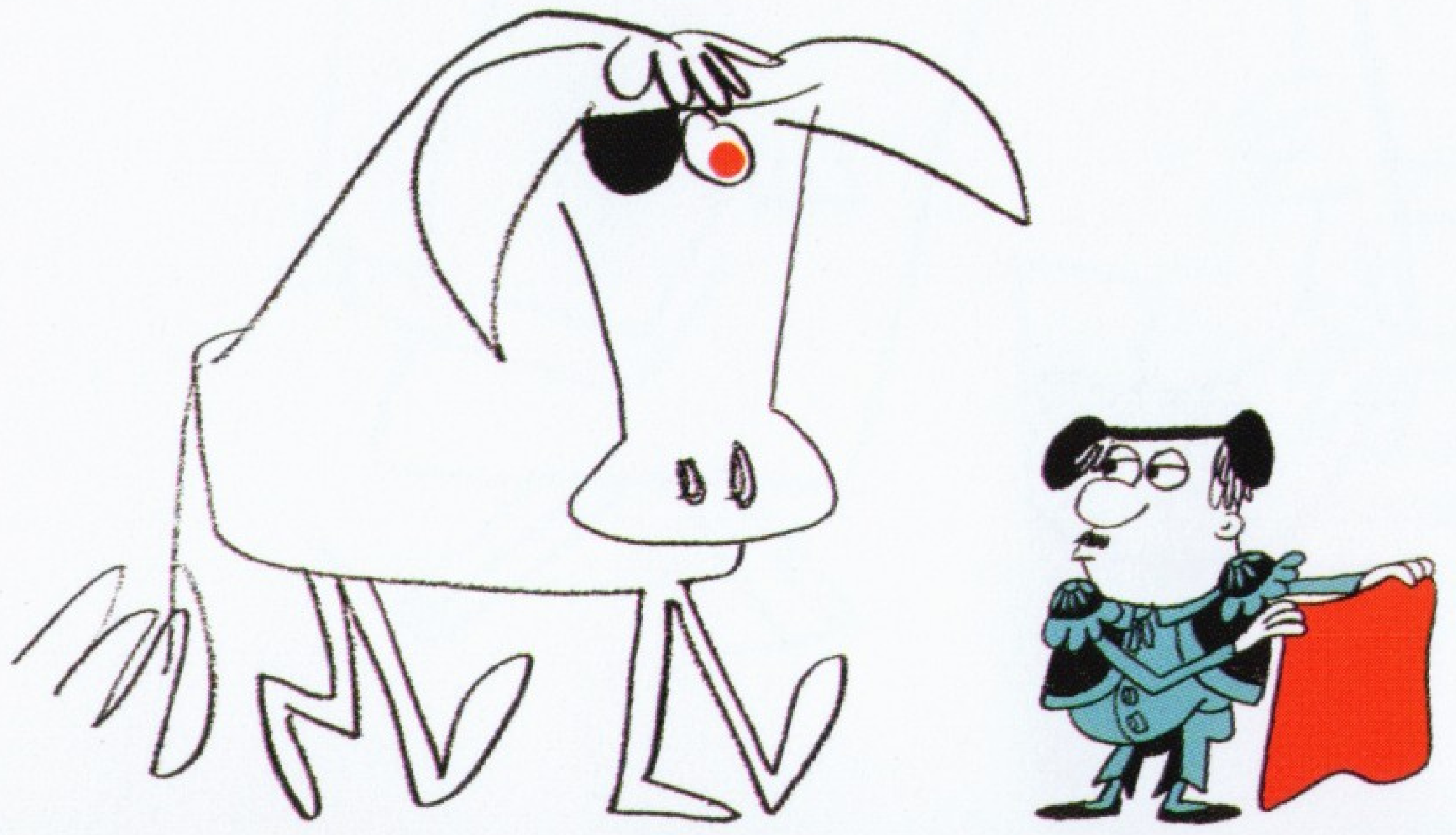
Perhaps the most groundbreaking unit working on *The Boing Boing Show* was that comprised of Fred Crippen, John Whitney, and Ernie Pintoff (later joined by Jimmy Murakami). They produced thirteen of the show's seventy-five shorts, more than any other unit working on the series. These included entertaining efforts like *Blues Pattern, Fight On for Old, Aquarium, The Three-Horned Flink, A Wounded Bird, The Performing Painter, The Unenchanted Princess,* and *Martians Come Back.* "We were knocking out about three a month," Crippen recalls. "Of course, they didn't have a lot of animation in them, but we were just pounding them out like mad." Pintoff and Murakami were fresh-out-of-school designers, while Whitney was an established experimental filmmaker who designed abstract sequences for shorts like *Blues Pattern* and *The Performing Painter* and also directed *The Lion Hunt*. Crippen was the animator of the films and also designed and directed a number of the shorts.

If the UPA animation style represented a rebellion against the fluid realism of Disney, then Fred Crippen's animation could perhaps be labeled the first revolt against UPA itself. His animation carried the studio's concept of designed animation to its ultimate conclusion with animation that was as absolutely minimal as possible. He could animate a person walking or playing the piano with a two-drawing cycle. Take away one drawing and the scene would be completely still. His style of animation was so unconventional that it confused many of the studio's veteran animators; Crippen recalls that animator Rudy Larriva came over once to look at his exposure sheets and simply shook his head at the sparse animation timing before walking away. Crippen's animation is indeed limited, but it defies being lumped together with the unimaginative "limited animation" techniques that Hanna-Barbera pioneered for their television shows. Although there are few drawings in Crippen's animation, there is nothing formulaic or standard about the movement; every action has its own unique graphic solution.

Fred Crippen was born in Lansing, Michigan, in 1928 and graduated from Michigan State University, where he had been the art director of the school's humor magazine, the *Spartan*. After a brief tenure at the Detroit industrial film studio Jam Handy Organization, Crippen moved to New York and was hired by Gene Deitch at UPA-NY in 1953. He was hired as a designer, but Crippen also learned to animate, and in 1955, he was recruited by UPA in Los Angeles to work on *The Boing Boing Show*. It was UPA's liberal artistic environment that allowed Crippen, who had only done assistant animation at UPA-NY for a year, to jump into direction and animation, a promotion that would have been impossible at any of the old-guard studios.

After the series folded, Crippen continued animating and directing at UPA (including the Oscar-nominated 1958 film *Trees and Jamaica Daddy*) before forming his own commercial studio, Pantomime Pictures, in 1959 with UPA coworkers John Marshall and Jack Heiter. Today, Crippen is the sole owner of the studio and still designs, directs, and animates films.





***The Matador and the Troubadour* (1956)**
Director: Fred Crippen
Left: Character design by Jimmy Murakami
Above: Background painting by Ervin Kaplan based on Jimmy Murakami layout

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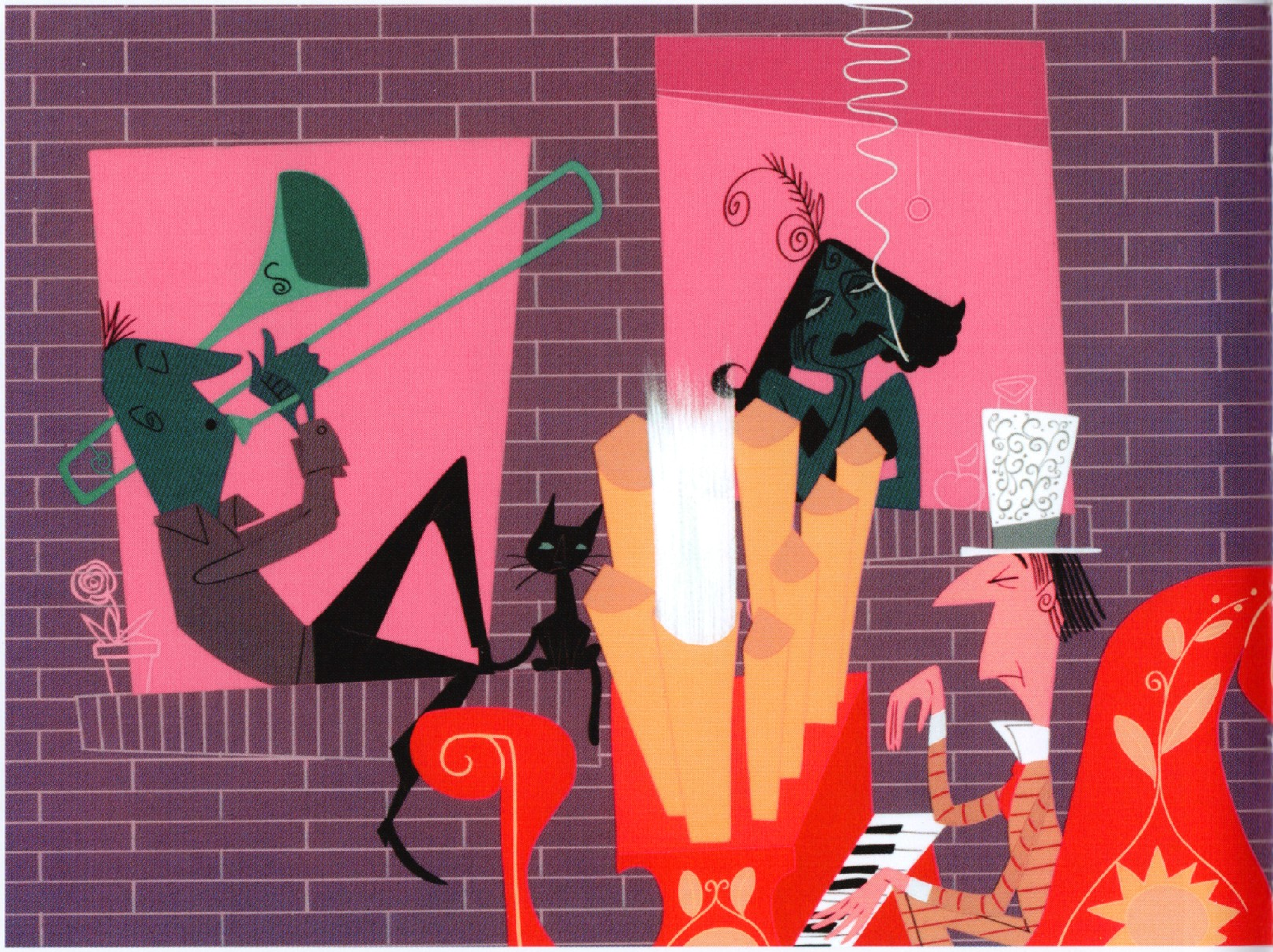
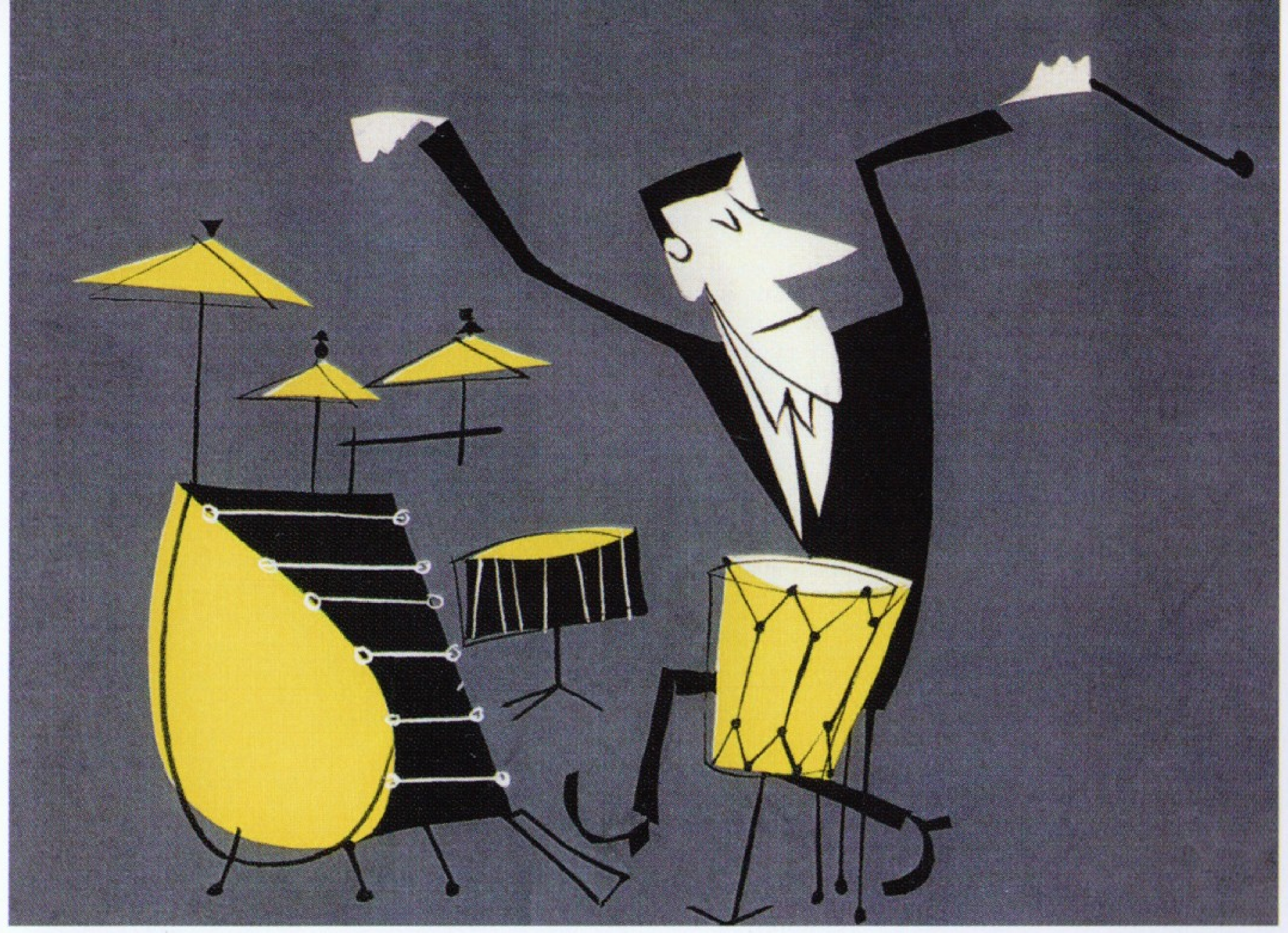
WALT DISNEY PRODUCTIONS

The 1950 Oscar for Best Animated Short was the first jab at the monolithic Disney animation studio; that year, none of Disney's films were nominated in the animated short category for only the second time since the inception of the award, in 1931. UPA's *Gerald McBoing Boing* won the Oscar. In 1951, *Gerald McBoing Boing* also won a special award at the British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) Awards. At the ceremony, Walt Disney was forced to appear for a photo op standing beside UPA president Stephen Bosustow; adding insult to injury, Disney was there to accept the award for the live-action documentary *Beaver Valley,* while Bosustow was recognized for achievement in the field that Walt had trailblazed. The appearance of the two men at this event is revealing: Bosustow is the younger of the two; he looks fresher and more svelte; his moustache is the exact same style as Walt's, only darker and more luxuriant—his appearance suggests the vitality and freshness of the UPA films when placed against the tired Disney films of the early 1950s.

The Disney-Bosustow comparison was hard to miss by anybody who followed the industry in the early 1950s. "He looks like Disney," proclaimed the *New York Times* in 1952 of Bosustow. Victor Haboush, who started at Disney around the time of this article, recalls rumblings around the studio about Walt's displeasure at the Bosustow comparison. Concern was warranted for Disney—prior to UPA, he had only dealt with imitators, never innovators. The Disney studio artists, once given the green light to experiment, responded admirably to the challenge of UPA and proceeded to create some of the decade's most stylish and well-designed films.



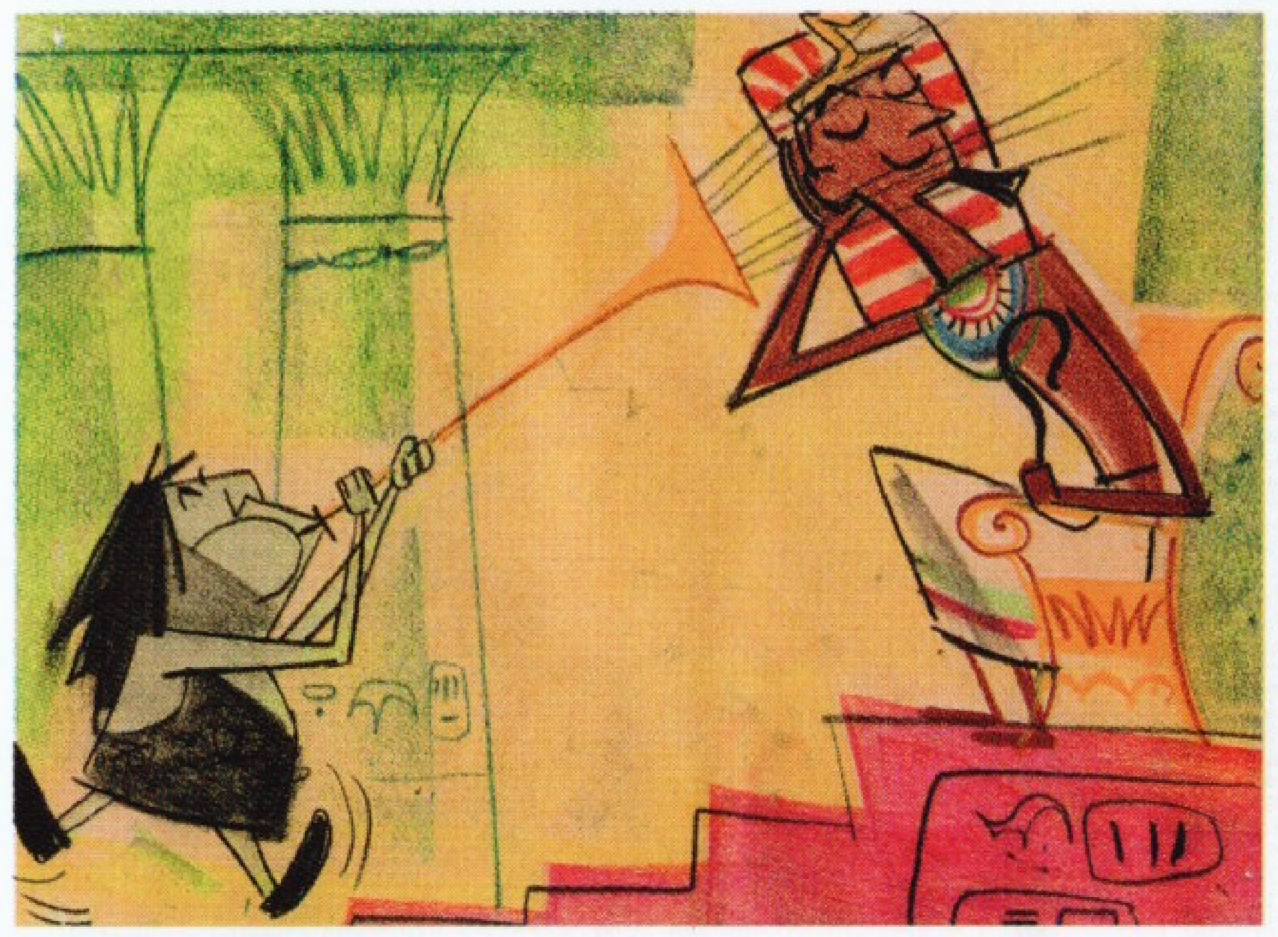


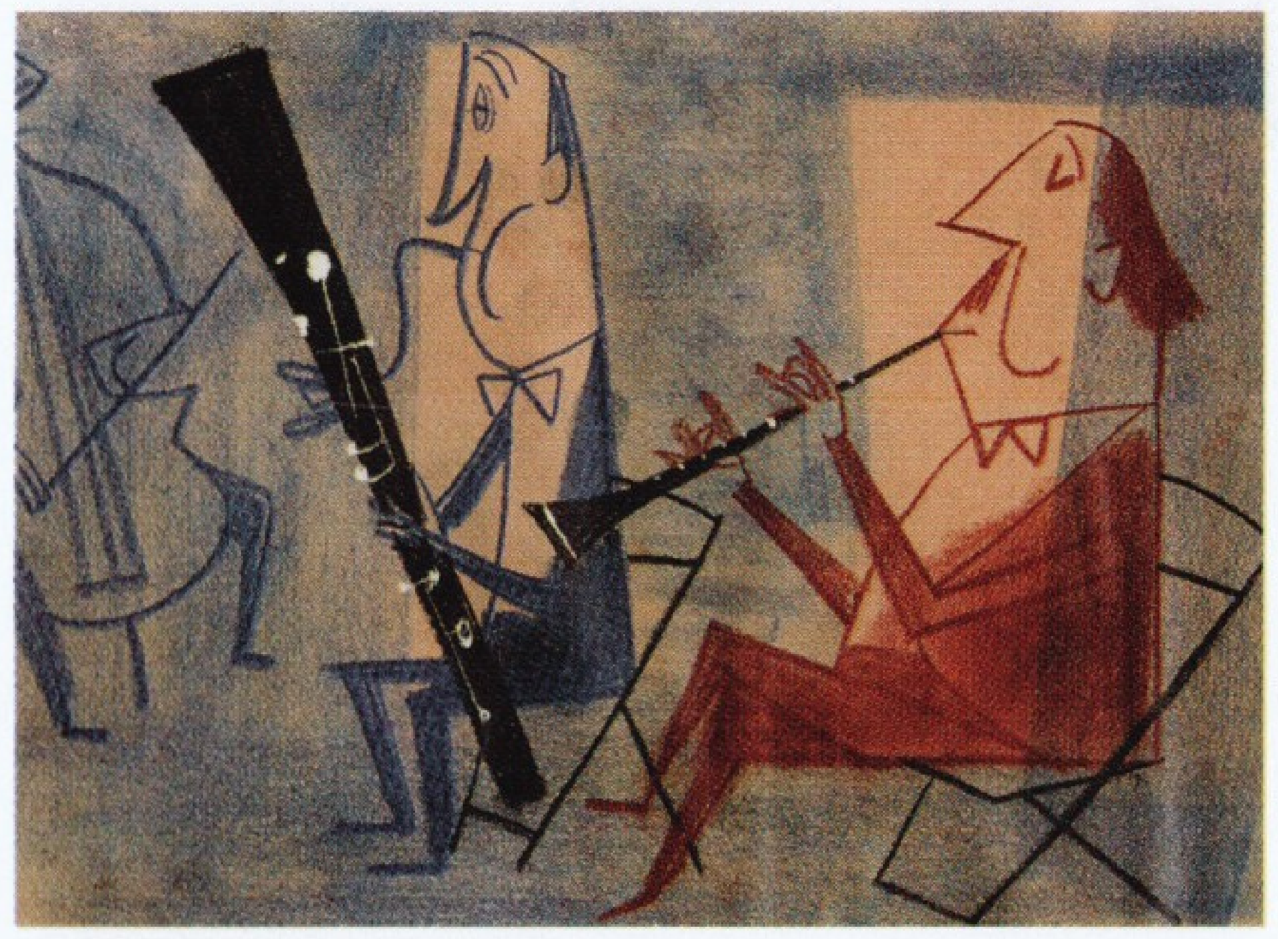
WARD KIMBALL

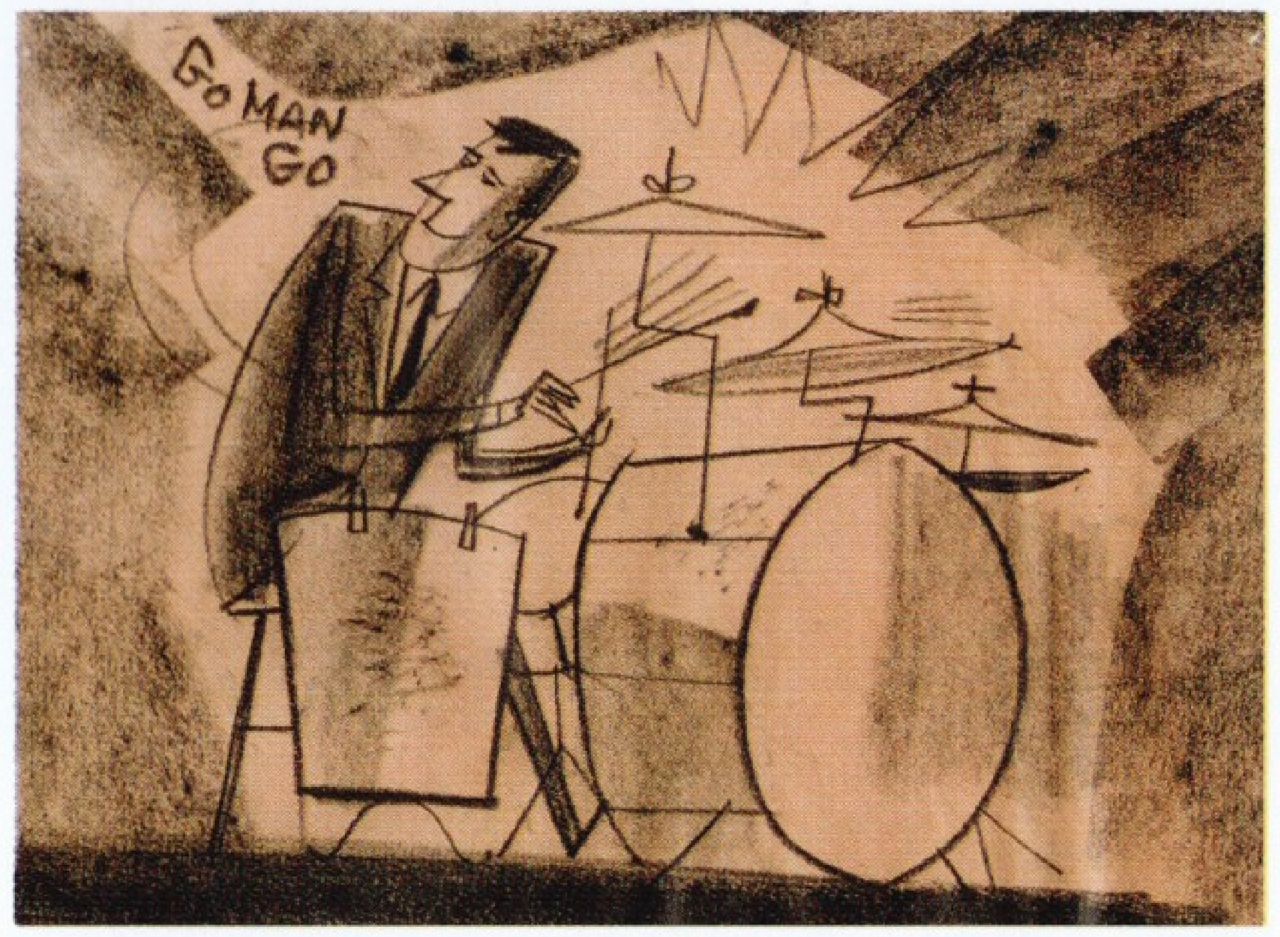
By the end of the 1950s, Disney features like *Sleeping Beauty* (1959) and *101 Dalmatians* (1961) were working off a relatively modern vocabulary, but in the early 1950s, the studio's graphic experiments were limited to its theatrical shorts and predominantly in the work of one director, Ward Kimball (1914–2002). Kimball was one of Walt's most liked and trusted artists. He had been an animator at the studio since 1934 and was responsible for the animation of Jiminy Cricket in *Pinocchio* and the Mad Hatter and Cheshire Cat in *Alice in Wonderland*. Though Kimball had spent his entire career at Disney, he remained a graphic iconoclast within the studio and displayed a sympathy for modern art shared by few of the studio's other animators. Kimball was excited by the burgeoning possibilities of designed animation in the early 1950s, and according to UPA animator Alan Zaslove, he was one of the few ranking Disney animators who visited the UPA studio frequently. Increasingly, he yearned to escape the graphic straitjacket of being a Disney animator—his test animation for "The Siamese Cat Song" in *Lady and the Tramp* had been rejected for being too experimental and unrealistic. Disney sensed the growing restlessness of Kimball and promoted him to director in 1952.

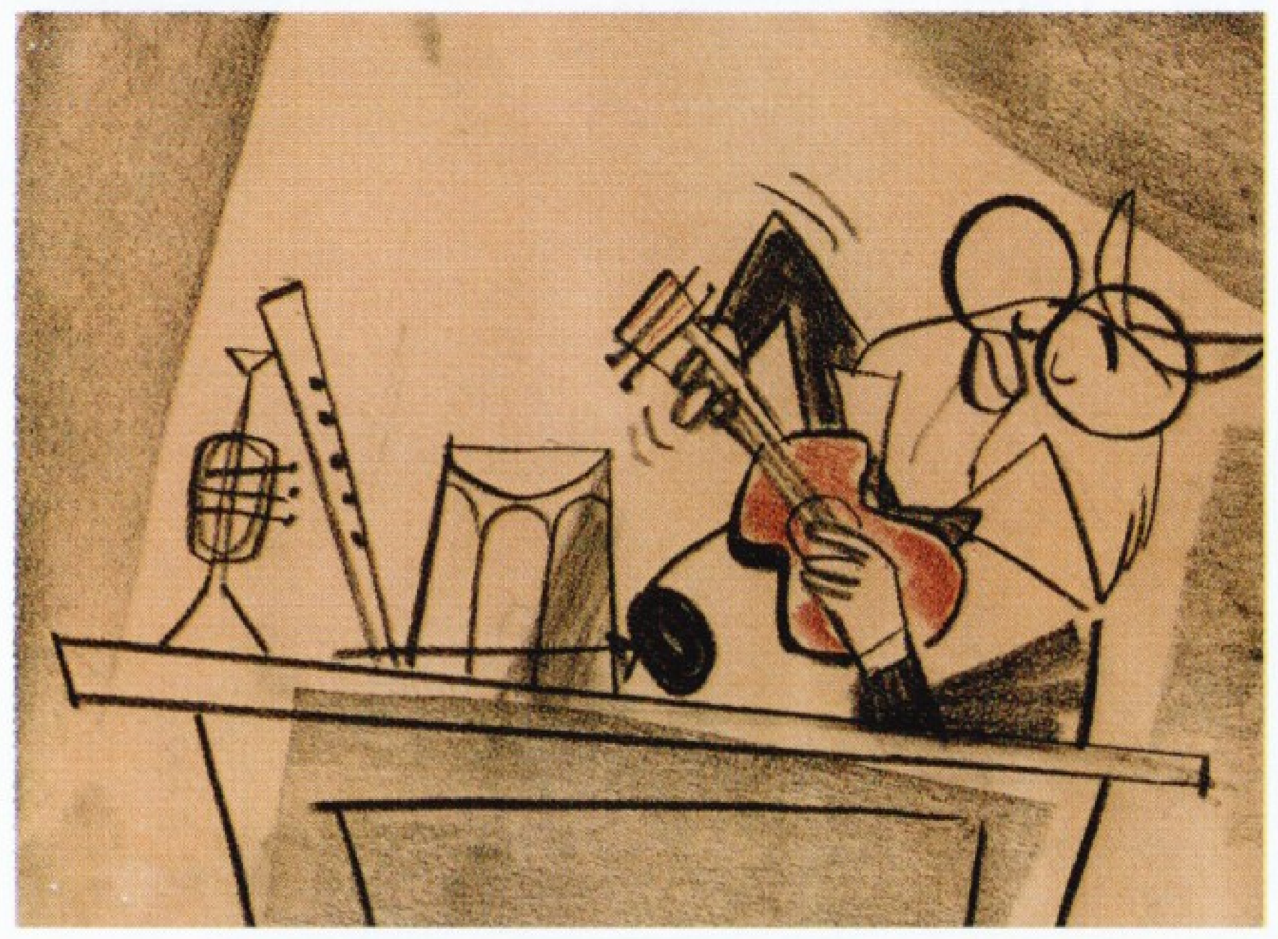
Kimball was assigned two projects to direct: *Adventures in Music: Melody* (May 28, 1953) and *Toot Whistle Plunk and Boom* (November 10, 1953). Both of these films feature a Professor Owl who explains musical concepts to a classroom of birds. The films weren't a mere updating of the "Disney style" but pushed forward into uncharted territory; they were modern in a way that no Disney film had ever been before. "[We] were cutting out old valentines and were gluing them to the background—all of those things, because I had discovered *Graphis* magazine, and it opened my eyes to some other way of doing things," Kimball recalled. According to Kimball, he made the decision to radically modernize the look of the first film, *Melody*, while Walt was visiting Europe, to avoid having to explain to Disney what he was doing.

While Kimball's freshman effort, *Melody*, has a playful and exuberant "look what I can do, Ma" quality, his second film, *Toot Whistle Plunk and Boom*, is a more cohesive and rewarding film. For this film, Kimball made sure everybody on the crew was in tune with his Modernist sensibilities. Instead of designing the film himself, as Kimball had done with *Melody*, he recruited Tom Oreb to style the film's characters. Frustrated by the lack of graphic projects at the studio, Oreb had left Disney in the early 1950s to explore opportunities as a designer at other studios. Kimball's projects offered him a reason to return to Disney. Two animators were handpicked for the project—Art Stevens and Julius Svendsen. Stevens, who joined the crew after *Melody*, had just been promoted to full animator on *Peter Pan* but was eager to leave feature animation and







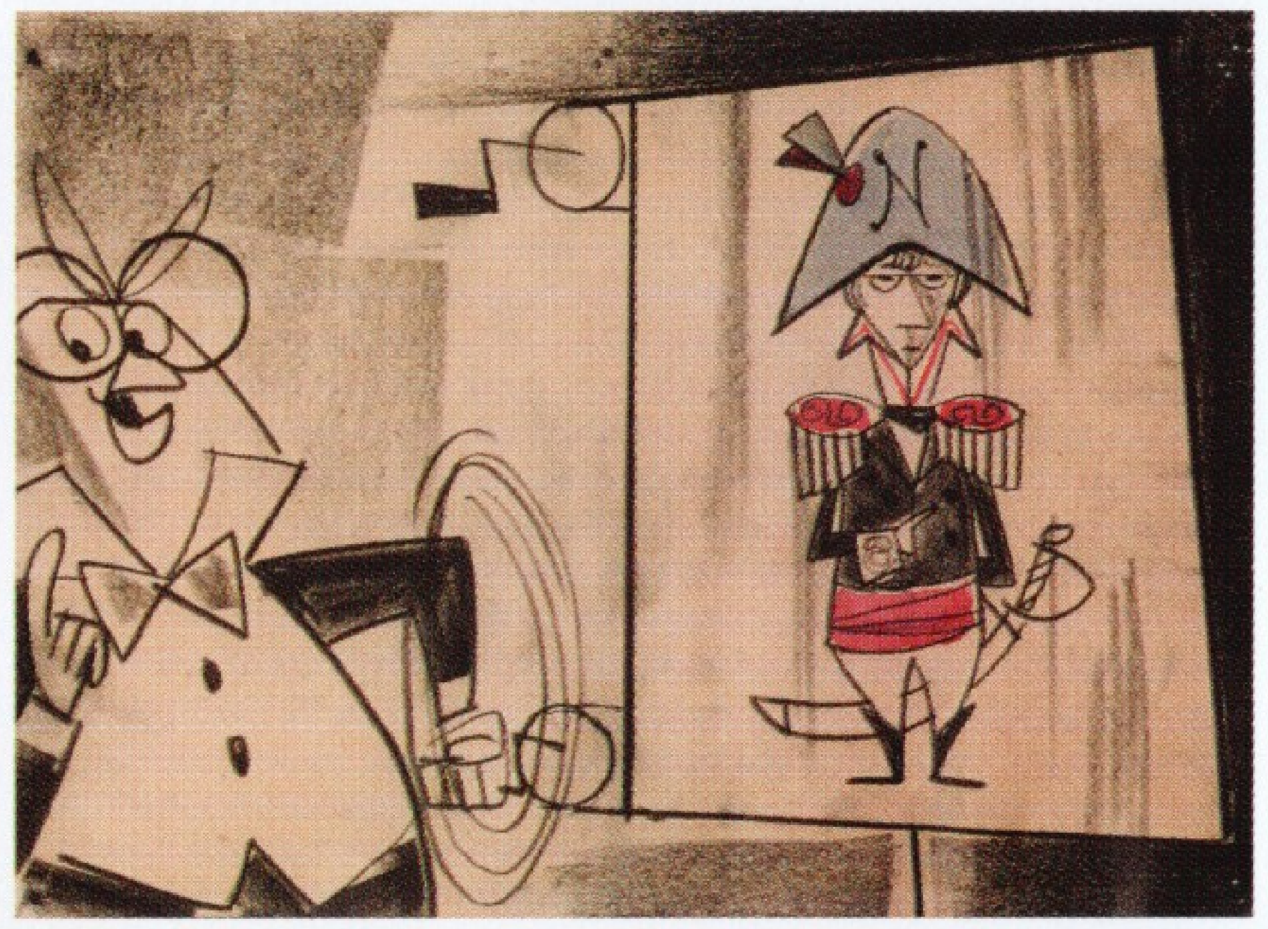


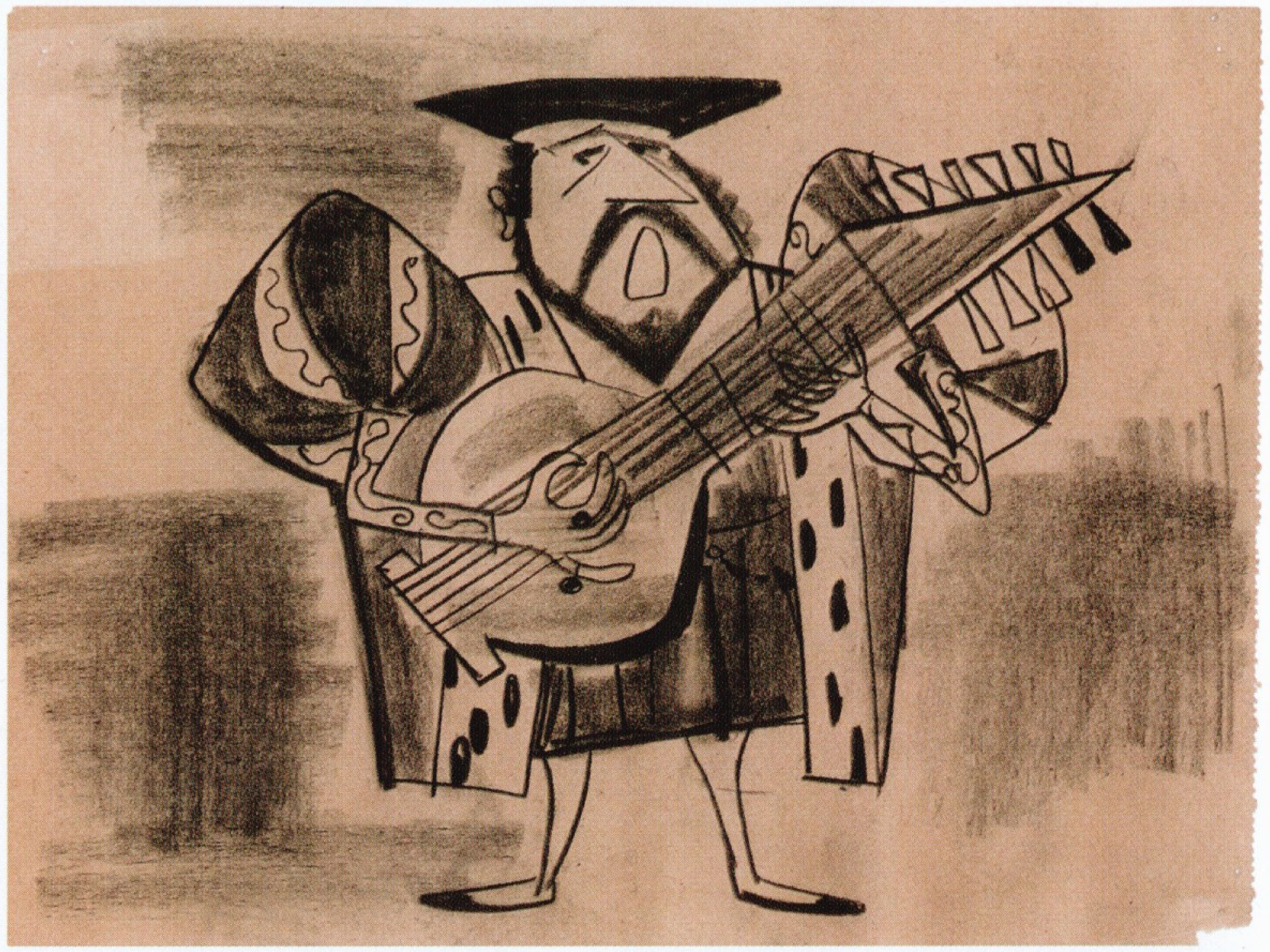
***Toot Whistle Plunk and Boom* (1953)**
Directors: Ward Kimball and C. August Nichols
Opposite: Film still
Top: Color styling concept by unknown artist
Right: Storyboard drawings by Tom Oreb

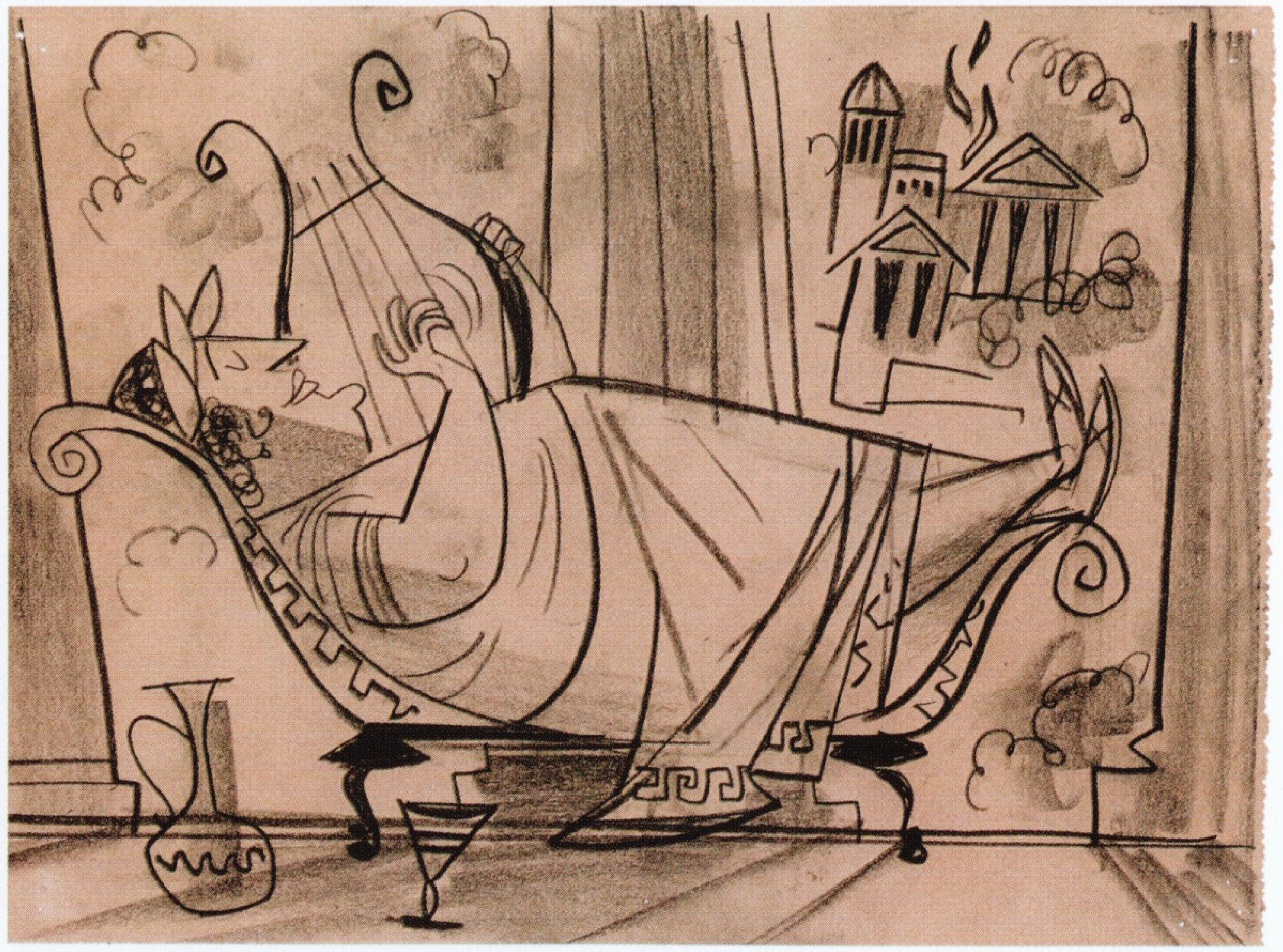
work on a more creative, less literal type of animation. Background painter Eyvind Earle and assistant art director Victor Haboush were relatively new recruits to the studio and added a modern touch to the color and layouts. Marc Davis, another top animator at the studio who shared Kimball's passion for modern art, was brought on to help develop the animation style, and animator Xavier Atencio was put in charge of cleaning up the animation to maintain the designed movement of the other animators' work.

The collaboration of these artists produced spectacular results. The animation crew that Kimball had assembled intuitively understood the type of animation required for Oreb's sophisticated character stylization. "There was an attempt to get a decorative feeling in the movement by limiting certain parts of the animation," Kimball explained. "My contention was there were certain types of comedy staging that were best done with limited animation. A *lack* of movement would put over the gag." This idea is put to superb use in the "popping strings" section of *Toot Whistle Plunk and Boom*, animated by Stevens. The various musician characters remain completely still, while the popping strings knock off only their hairpieces. The gag is repeated in *Donald in Mathmagic Land* (1958); this time though it is animated in the traditional Disney full-animation style, diminishing the gag's comedic impact.

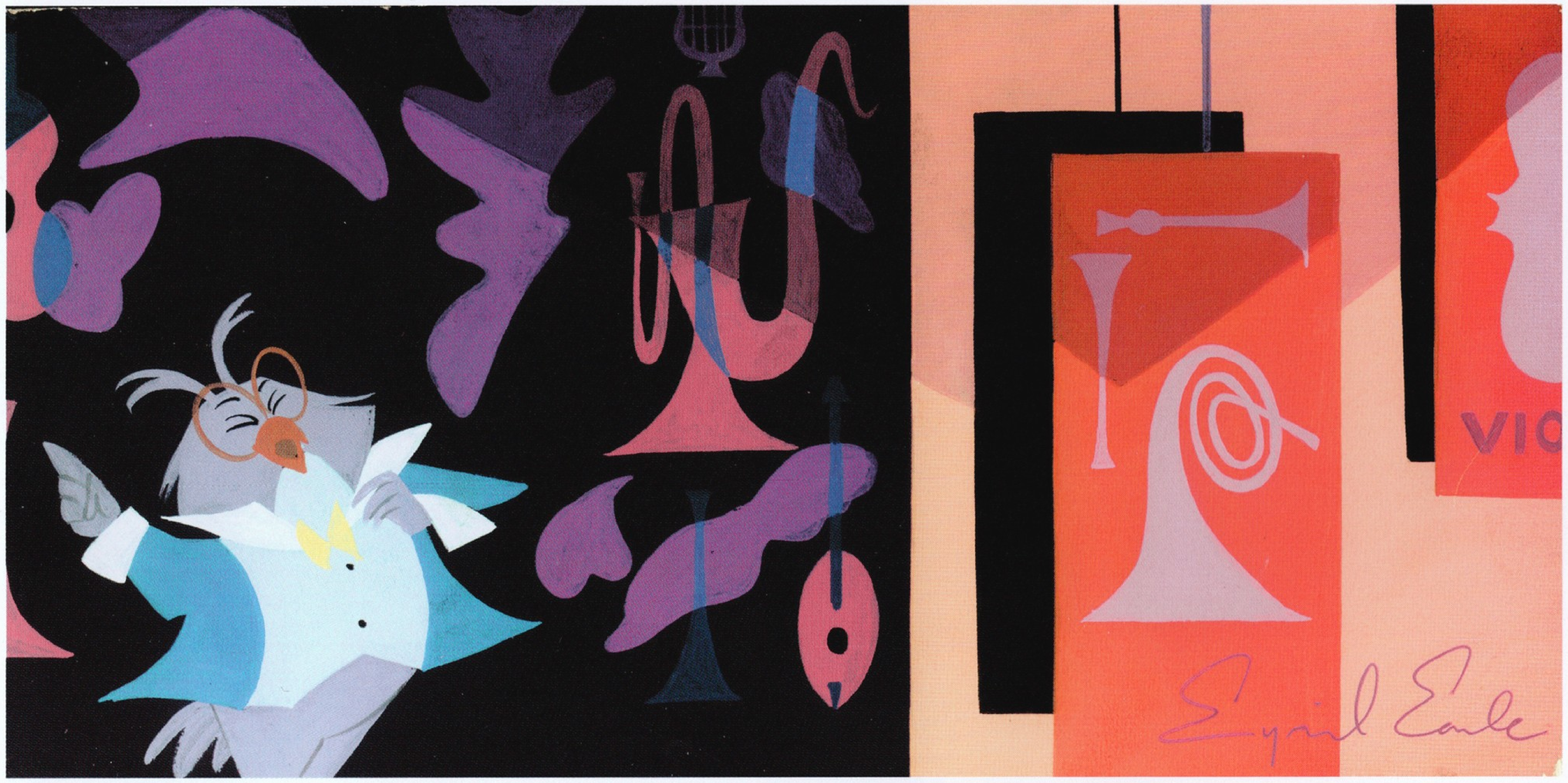
Though many people at the studio—including even those artists working on the films, such as Tom Oreb—felt that Kimball would get the axe for producing such un-Disney-like films, Walt Disney appreciated the results. Kimball admits, though, that he never understood Walt's feedback on *Toot Whistle Plunk and Boom;* Disney told him, "You have a very warm picture there." In any case, Disney recognized the potential of these films. Midway through production of *Toot Whistle Plunk and Boom,* Kimball was asked to rework the film so the studio could release it as its first Cinemascope cartoon, and the film went on to win the Best Animated Short Oscar in 1953. *Melody,* before it, had been produced and released in 3-D, a first for an animated film in the United States.

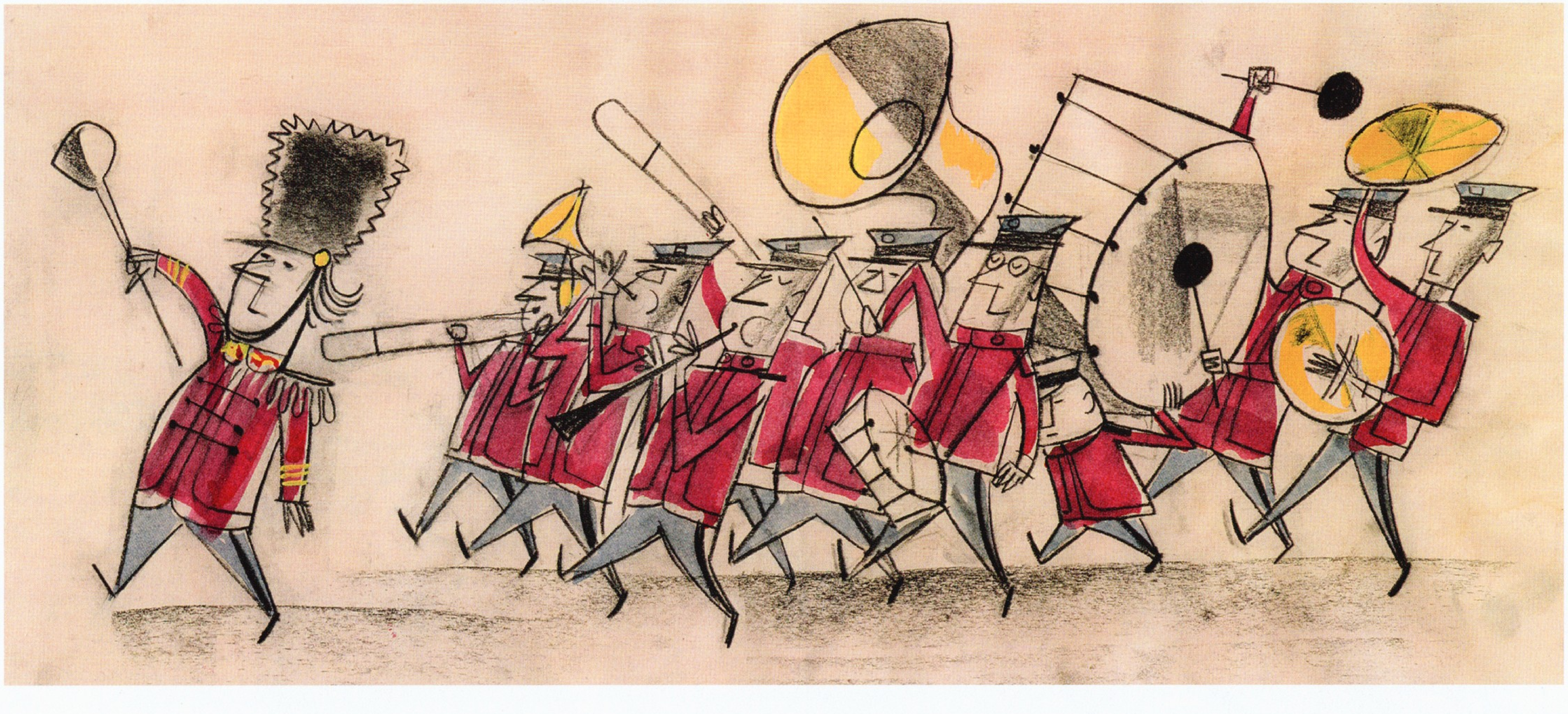






***Toot Whistle Plunk and Boom* (1953)**
Directors: Ward Kimball and C. August Nichols
This page: Storyboard drawings by Tom Oreb
Opposite top: Color styling concept by Eyvind Earle
Opposite bottom: Storyboard drawing by Tom Oreb


VIC
Eyvind Earle



RUFF-MICKEY
• MODEL
SUGGESTIONS 4 TV

TV COMMERCIALS

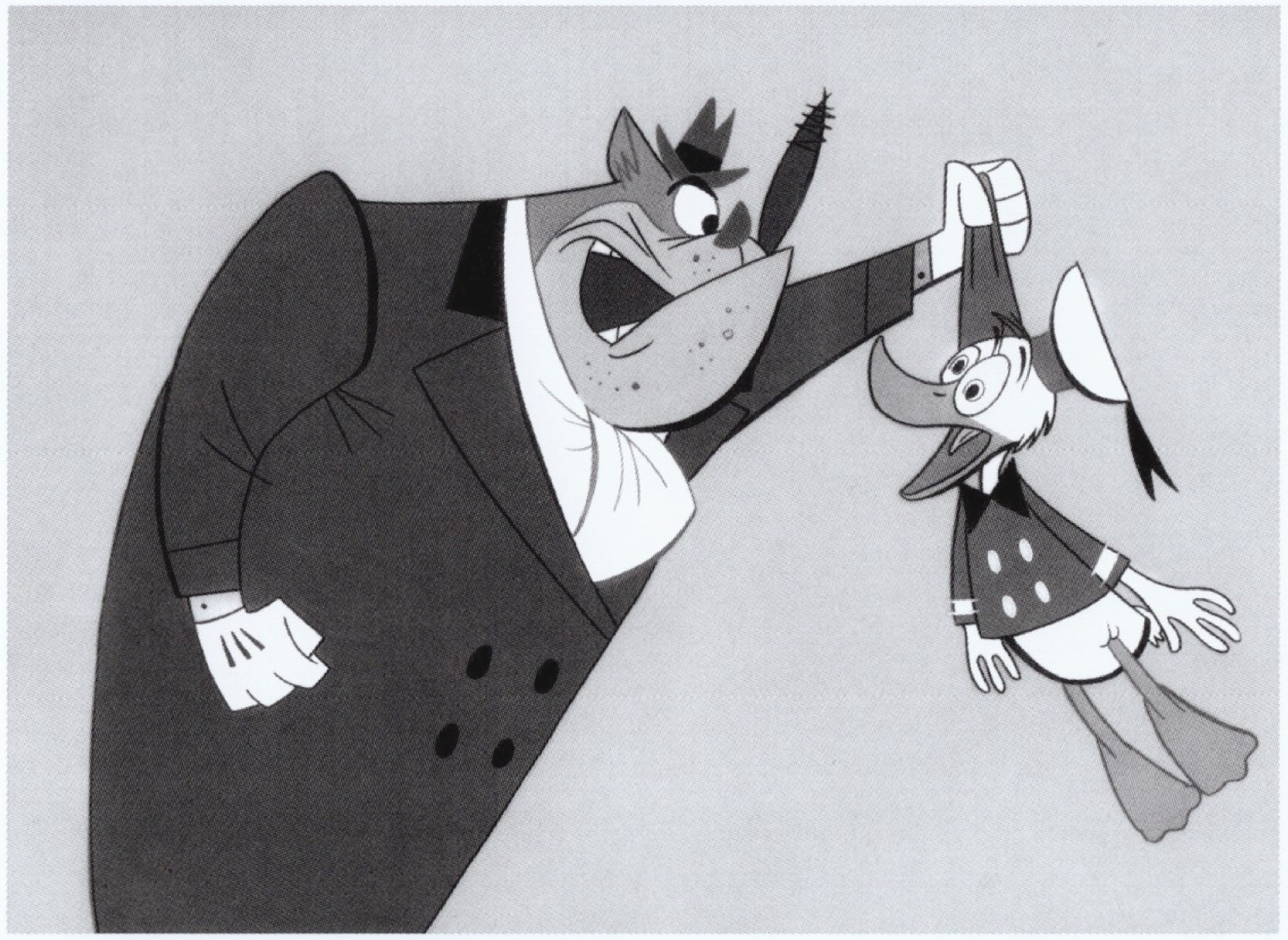
Disney anticipated the growing market for television commercials and started an in-house commercial unit in 1952. When the studio began producing live-action TV programming in the mid-1950s, he was able to offer show sponsors Disney-produced TV ads, often featuring the studio's own cartoon stars. They also created new characters like Ipana Toothpaste's Bucky Beaver, Mohawk Carpet's Tommy Mohawk, the Cheerios Kid, and 7-Up's Fresh-Up Freddie. The unit's main designer was Tom Oreb, who updated the look of the classic characters as well as created new advertising characters. According to Victor Haboush, the American Motors commercials that featured Oreb's redesigned Mickey Mouse caused a major headache for the unit:

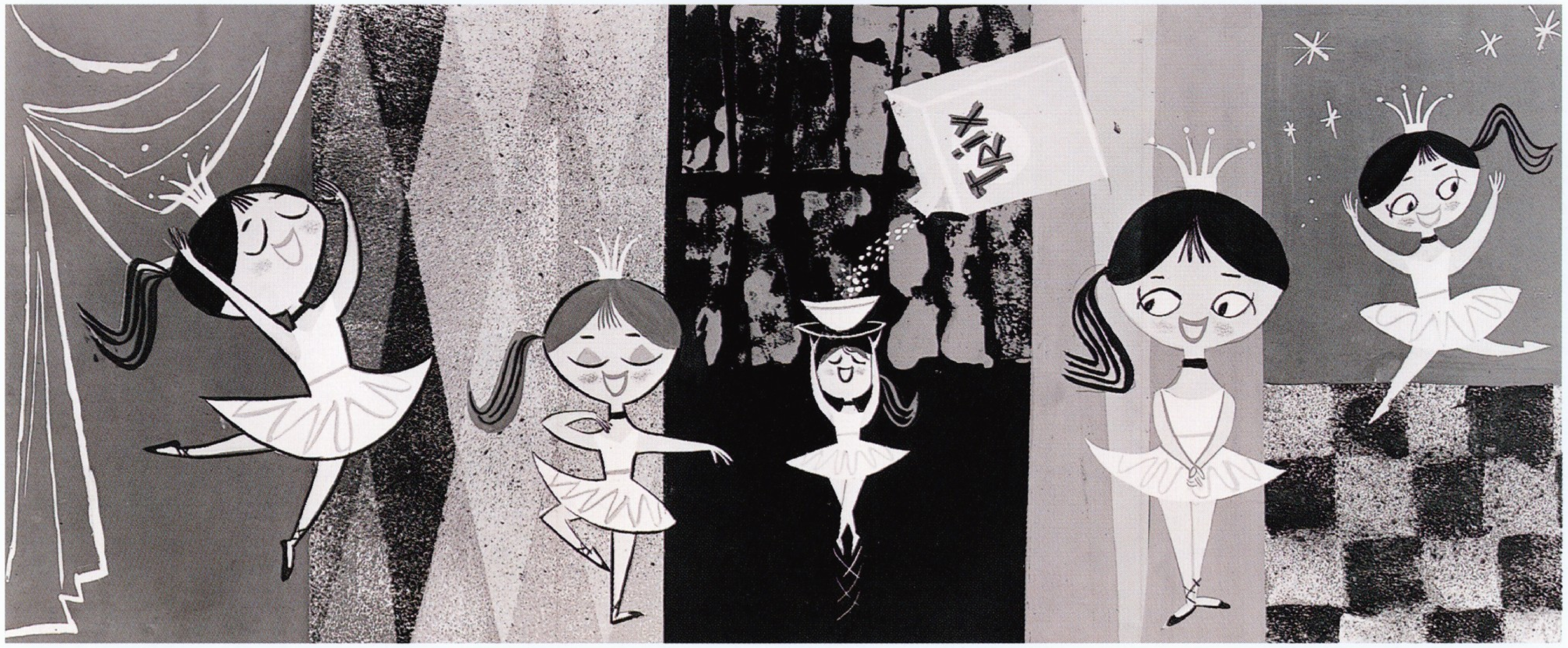
> *There was a little kid that used to write Walt telling him to stay away from modern art because it's Communistic. So when the commercial came on, he got a letter from this kid, a little malcontent sitting somewhere, and he wrote, "I'm disappointed Walt. I never thought you'd succumb. What happened to you?" and Walt went crazy. He stormed down there and outlawed us against using any of the Disney characters in the commercials. I remember at the time everybody was incensed that we couldn't use them, and it basically spelled the end of the unit. [Companies] were coming for the celebrity; to be able to use Disney characters in their commercials.*

McCarthyism in miniature was the least of the unit's concerns. Disney producer Harry Tytle admitted that although the unit brought the studio much needed capital, it was problematic for Disney on many levels:

> *It was not a field either Walt or Roy were happy to be in. Their reasoning was sound. We didn't own the characters we produced for other companies; there was absolutely no residual value. Worse, we were at the whim of the client; at each stage of production we had to twiddle our thumbs and await approval before we could venture on to the next step.*

The commercial unit was disbanded by the end of the decade.

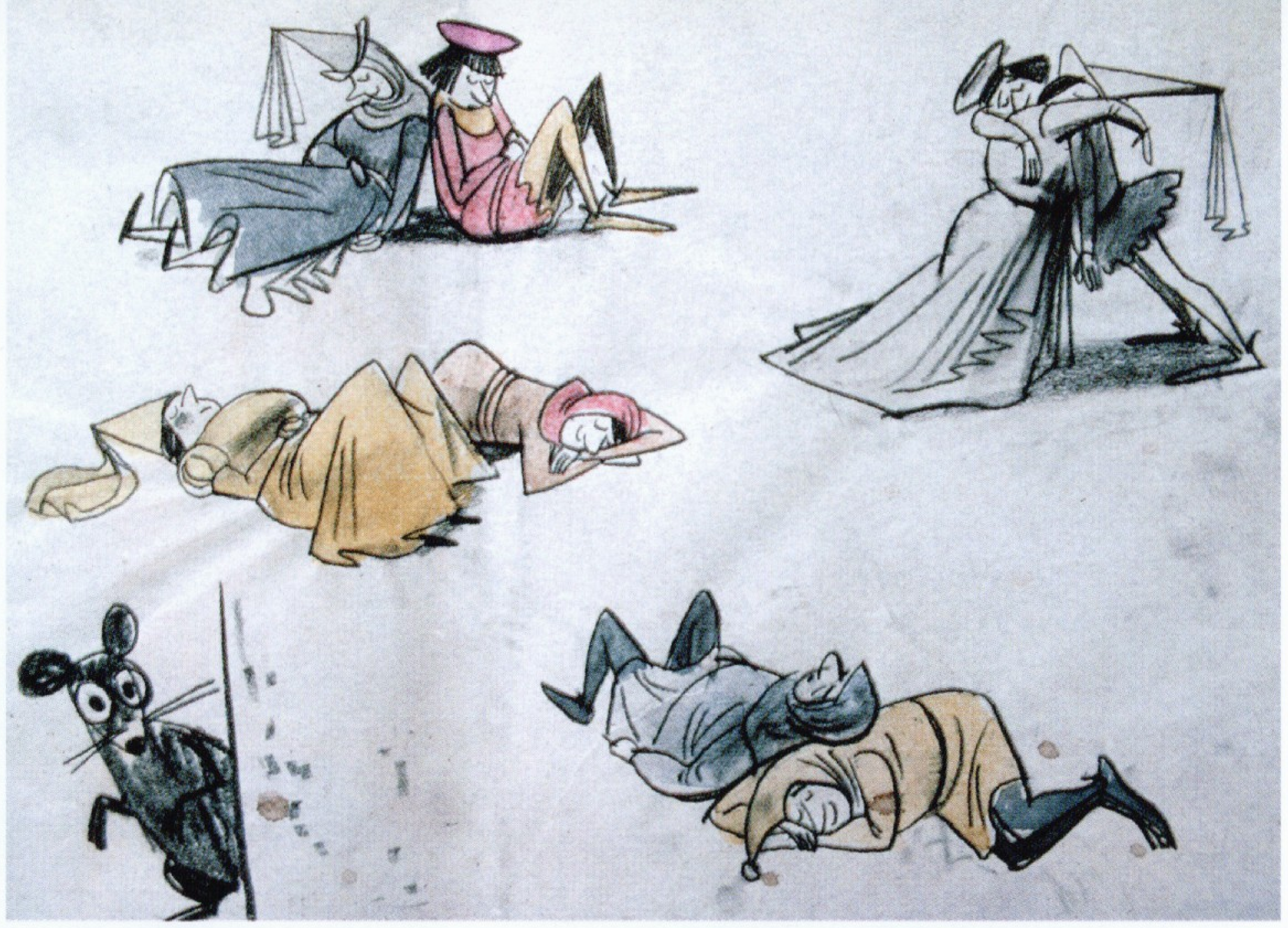




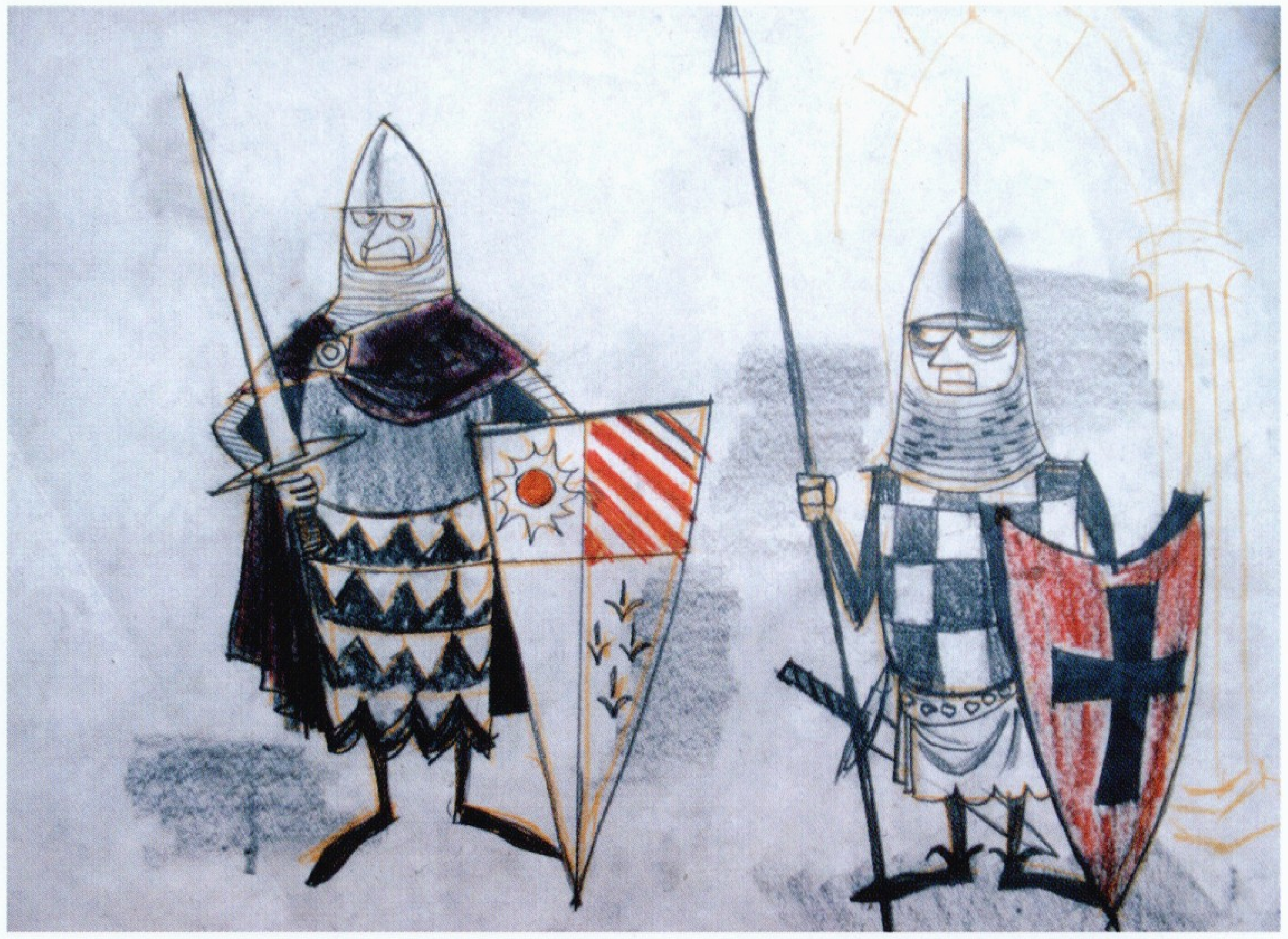
Above: **TRIX CEREAL COMMERCIAL**
Designer: Tom Oreb
Concept painting by Oreb

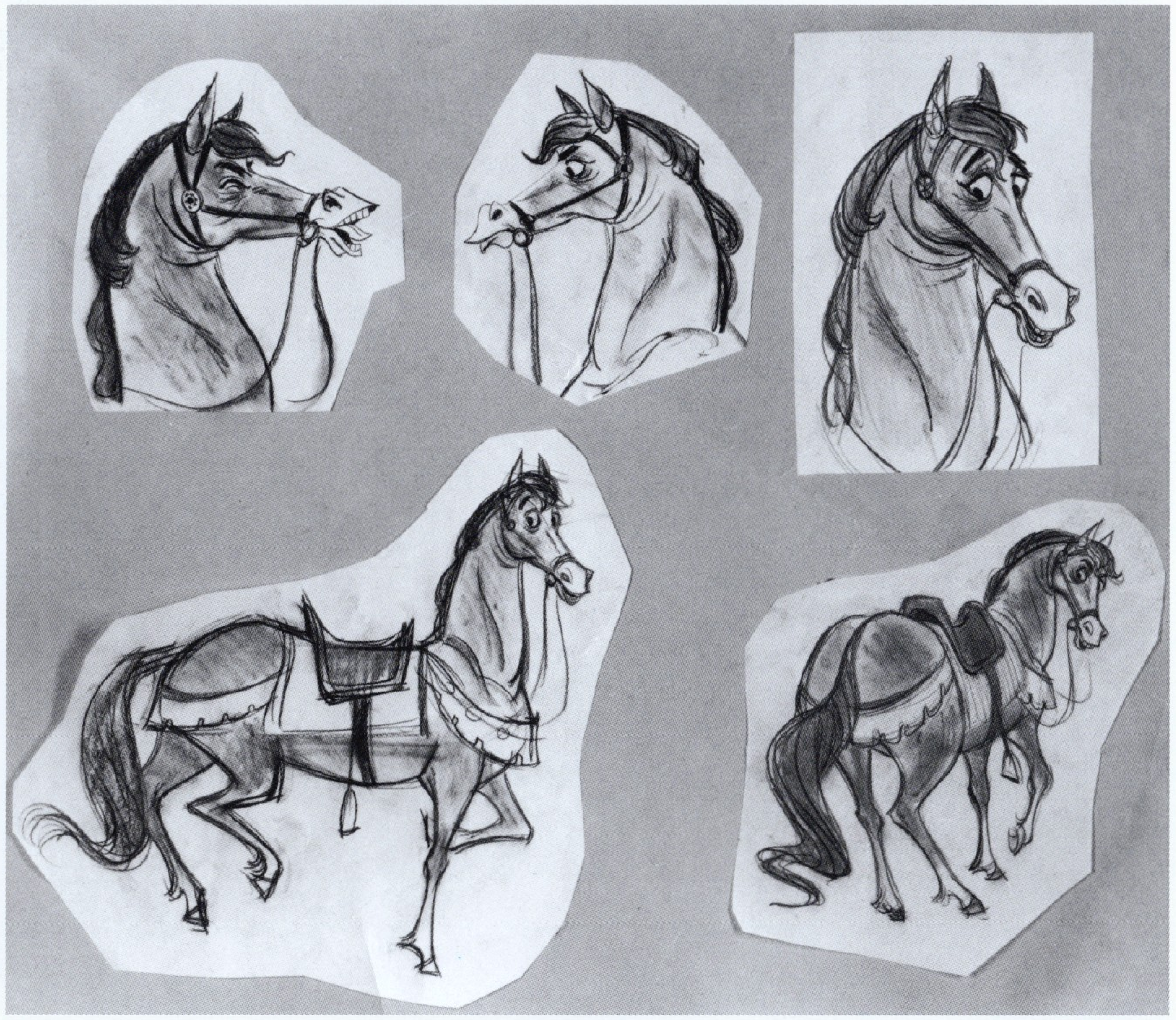
Top: **AMERICAN MOTORS COMMERCIAL**
Designer: Tom Oreb
Production cel

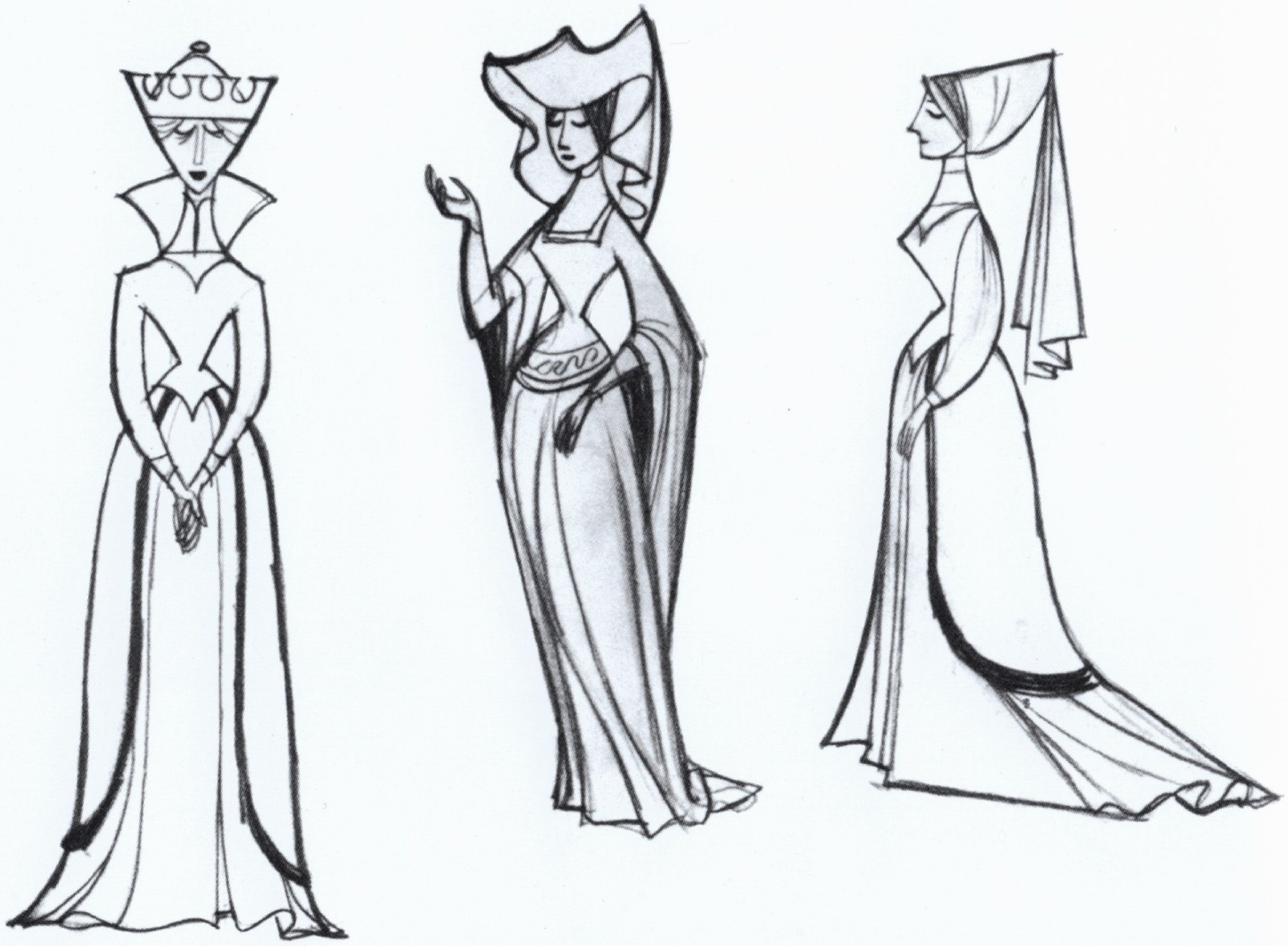
Opposite: **AMERICAN MOTORS COMMERCIAL**
Designer: Tom Oreb
Model sheet for
modernized Mickey Mouse

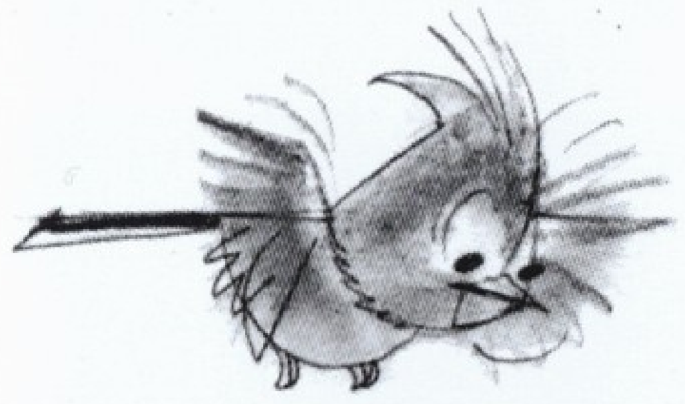


This page and opposite:
***Sleeping Beauty* (1959)**
Director: Clyde Geronimi
Character styling sketches by
Tom Oreb









TOM OREB

Tom Oreb (1913–1987) dedicated his career to animation design in a way that few others did. He could design characters and backgrounds with equal mastery and in a remarkable range of styles. Whichever style he employed, his work is characterized by a consummate sense of draftsmanship, a graphic purity, and an elegance of form that instantly distinguishes his work from other designers of the period. There are no tawdry frills in Oreb's drawing, no arbitrary ornamentation. Every line counts. His artistic talent was evident from an early age when he was a budding artist at Manual Arts High School in downtown Los Angeles under the tutelage of Frederick Schwankovsky. His circle of friends at Manual Arts included two other students who would become major figures in the modern art world: Jackson Pollock and Philip Guston.

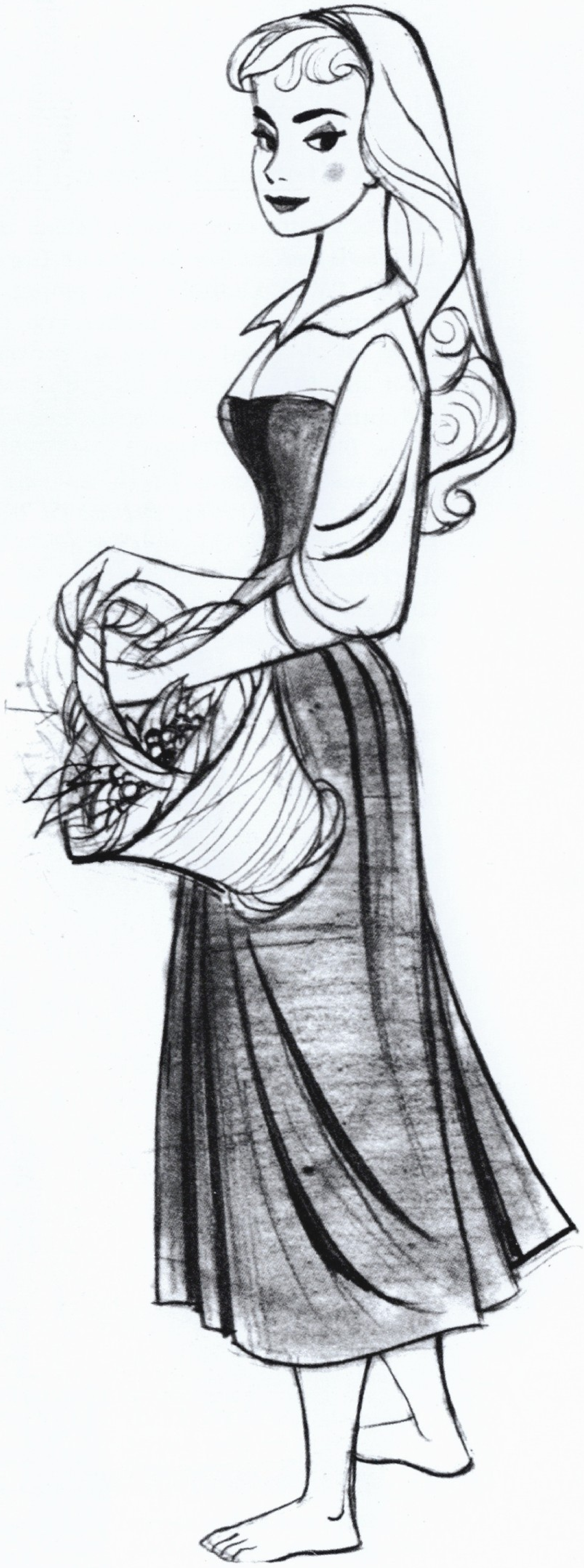
Oreb was hired at Disney straight out of high school, and he worked his way up the animation ranks over the next decade. He briefly ventured beyond the studio in the early 1950s and designed the MGM short *Symphony in Slang* for Tex Avery and numerous commercials at Ray Patin Productions before Ward Kimball lured him back to Disney to design *Toot Whistle Plunk and Boom*. Throughout the 1950s, Oreb was often assigned the studio's most ambitious graphic projects, culminating in his "character styling" duties on *Sleeping Beauty* and *101 Dalmatians* (with Bill Peet).

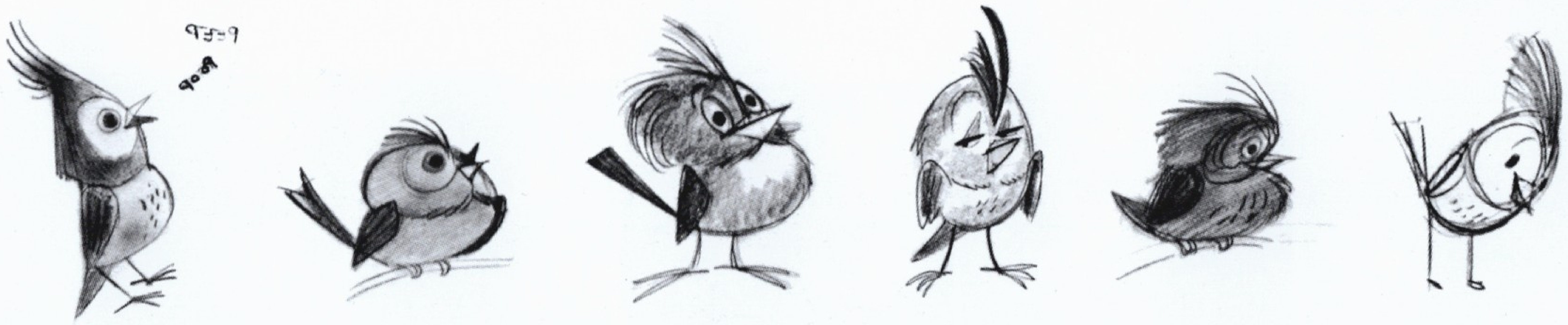
His conceptual designs for *Sleeping Beauty* are a masterful display of his range as a designer, an outpouring of graphic inventiveness that includes Golden Book–styled rabbits, a Ronald Searle–inspired horse, and human characters designed to complement Eyvind Earle's austere background styling. For the main character, Princess Aurora, Oreb suggested swirling, two-dimensional shapes within the character's hair, a design trait that was carried over in the final animation of the character by Marc Davis. Oreb's design of Prince Phillip's horse, Samson, was largely inspired by Searle's equine illustrations in *The Diverting History of John Gilpin*, by William Cowper (1952). "He had no hesitation about being influenced by various artists," Disney animator Iwao Takamoto recalls. "He was one of these very facile draftsmen that could look at something, enjoy it, and find ways to let it influence his work." During the summer of 1957, Searle was working in Los Angeles on the storyboard for the animated film *Energetically Yours* and dropped by to visit the Disney animation studio. Victor Haboush, who shared an office with Tom Oreb, recalls what happened when Searle came into their room and saw Oreb's Searle-like drawings of the horse, Samson:

> *It was just Tommy and I in this room, and Tommy had all the character drawings on the wall. Ronald Searle came in with an entourage. At that time, he was very important. We were all looking at his work in the studio. He didn't say a word, he just walked around the room, looking at everything. Everybody had left before him and he just lingered at the door, turned around, stuck his long finger out, pointed at his horse, said to Tommy 'My horse,' and walked out. And Tom fell off his stool. He loved that.*

The circumstances of Oreb's departure from the animation industry are tragic. Like many animation artists of his generation, Oreb drank profusely, and his addiction to alcohol, compounded by other personal problems, caused a premature end to his career. He left Disney in September 1959, almost certainly not by choice and still very much at the top of his game. Following a brief stint working at UPA on the *Dick Tracy* TV series, his animation career was effectively over. Thirty years after last working with Oreb, Eyvind Earle wrote about his Disney colleague:

> *Tom Oreb was an extraordinary artist and unequalled as a designer and a draftsman. . . . Tom's influence might be microscopic in my work today, but I know that lingering deep within me is the remembrance of dynamic composition and stylizing that made Tom Oreb a giant among the giants.*





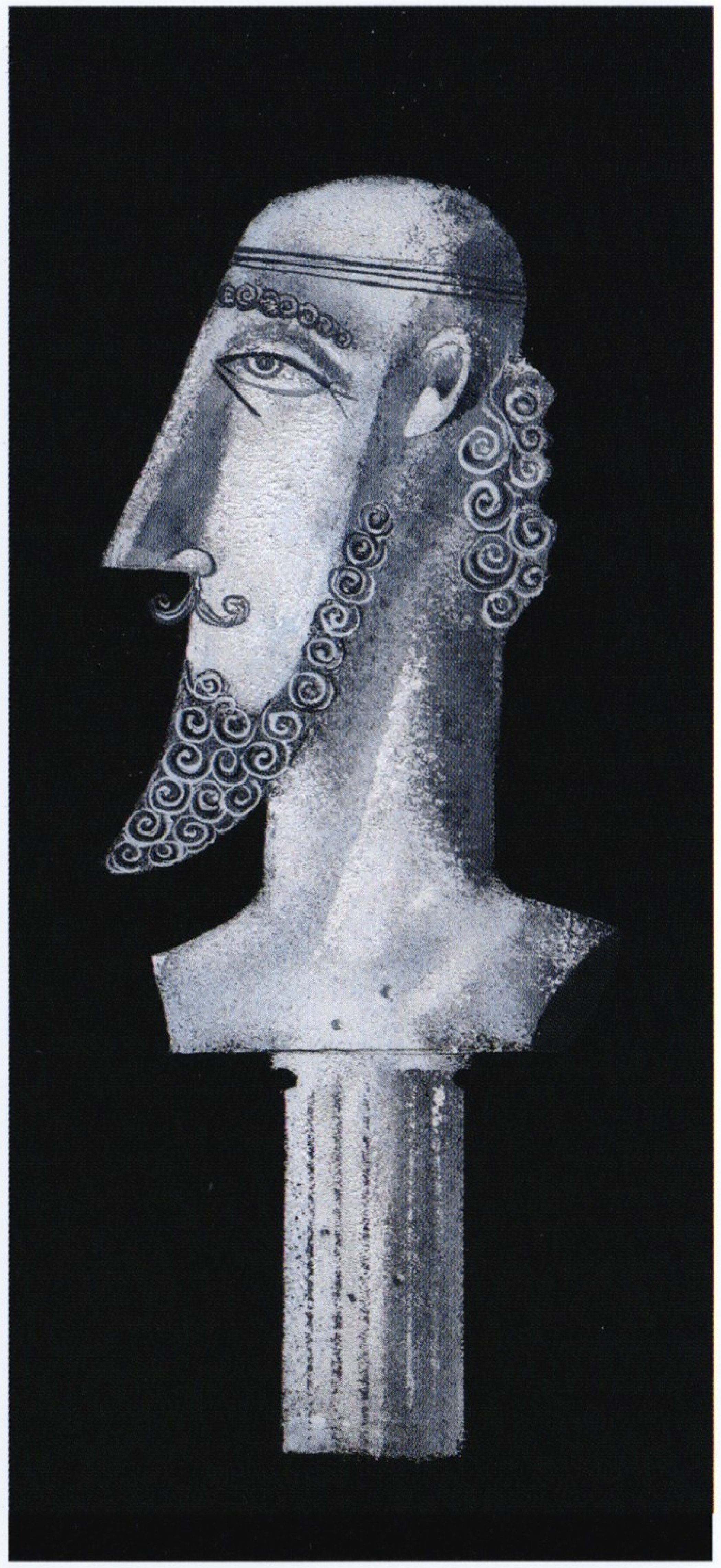
WARD KIMBALL'S SPACE FILMS

As if the stylistic experiments of *Melody* and *Toot Whistle Plunk and Boom* weren't un-Disney enough, Ward Kimball's next project at the studio pushed even further into the realm of designed animation. Between 1954 and 1956, Kimball directed, wrote, and produced three hour-long episodes of the *Disneyland* television series revolving around space travel. The shows—*Man in Space* (March 9, 1955), *Man and the Moon* (December 28, 1955), and *Mars and Beyond* (December 4, 1957)—indulged the American public's cold war fascination with space exploration and were successfully informative; President Eisenhower requested a print of *Man in Space* to screen for his military brass. The shows combined factual live-action lessons from leading scientists of the day, such as Willy Ley, Wernher von Braun, and Heinz Haber, with lighthearted animation segments. Conceptually, the format bore resemblance to Frank Capra's *Bell Science* series, but Kimball's offbeat sensibilities gave the animated segments an edge quite unlike the Capra productions.

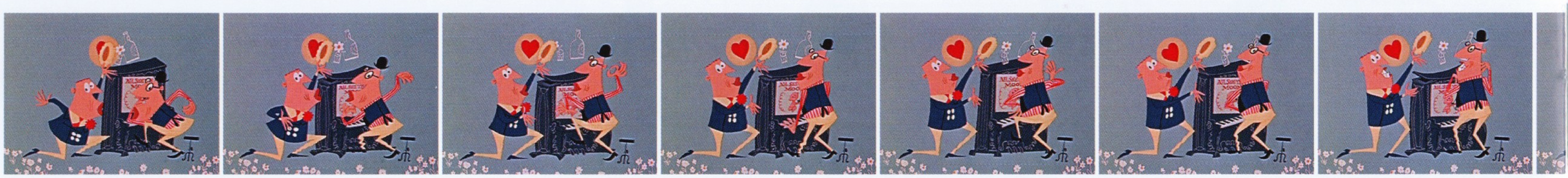
Kimball considered working on the space series "the creative high point" of his career. Each of the films featured increasingly ambitious animated segments, culminating in the deliriously inventive *Mars and Beyond*, with its endless parade of fancifully designed and animated alien life forms. As in his earlier music-themed films, Kimball continued to explore the idea of stylized animation. Unlike *limited animation*, in which a character's movement is limited in all respects, in *stylized animation* isolated elements of a character are fully animated while the rest of the figure remains still. For example, if a character is walking, his entire upper body might be frozen solid, with his legs being the only moving element. What's remarkable about Kimball's use of stylized animation is how he and his animators, like Julius Svendsen and Art Stevens, consistently exploited the contrast between stillness and movement to achieve brilliant comic effect.

Tom Oreb, who had been Kimball's main design collaborator on *Toot Whistle Plunk and Boom*, didn't work on the space specials. He was tied up designing characters for Disney's commercial unit and creating early conceptual art for *Sleeping Beauty*. As a result, the space specials have an even cartoonier sensibility than Kimball's earlier short films—a look that reflects Kimball's personal style of drawing along with the work of John Dunn (1920–1983), a young storyman who Kimball had discovered at the studio. Dunn was less a designer than a really funny cartoonist, but his pared-down creative cartooning style was instrumental in establishing the look of these films. Animator Art Stevens acknowledges Dunn's influence, saying that "he had a style of his own that was very clear-cut and very suitable for stylized animation."

Kimball produced other projects during the 1950s, including *Eyes in Outer Space* (1959), a half-hour theatrical short patterned after the space specials. The short featured another beautifully designed cartoon segment conceived by John Dunn and designed by Kimball and Dunn. In the film's second animated segment, in which the process of rain formation was explained, Kimball created a daringly abstract sequence supported with a jazz score by George Bruns.

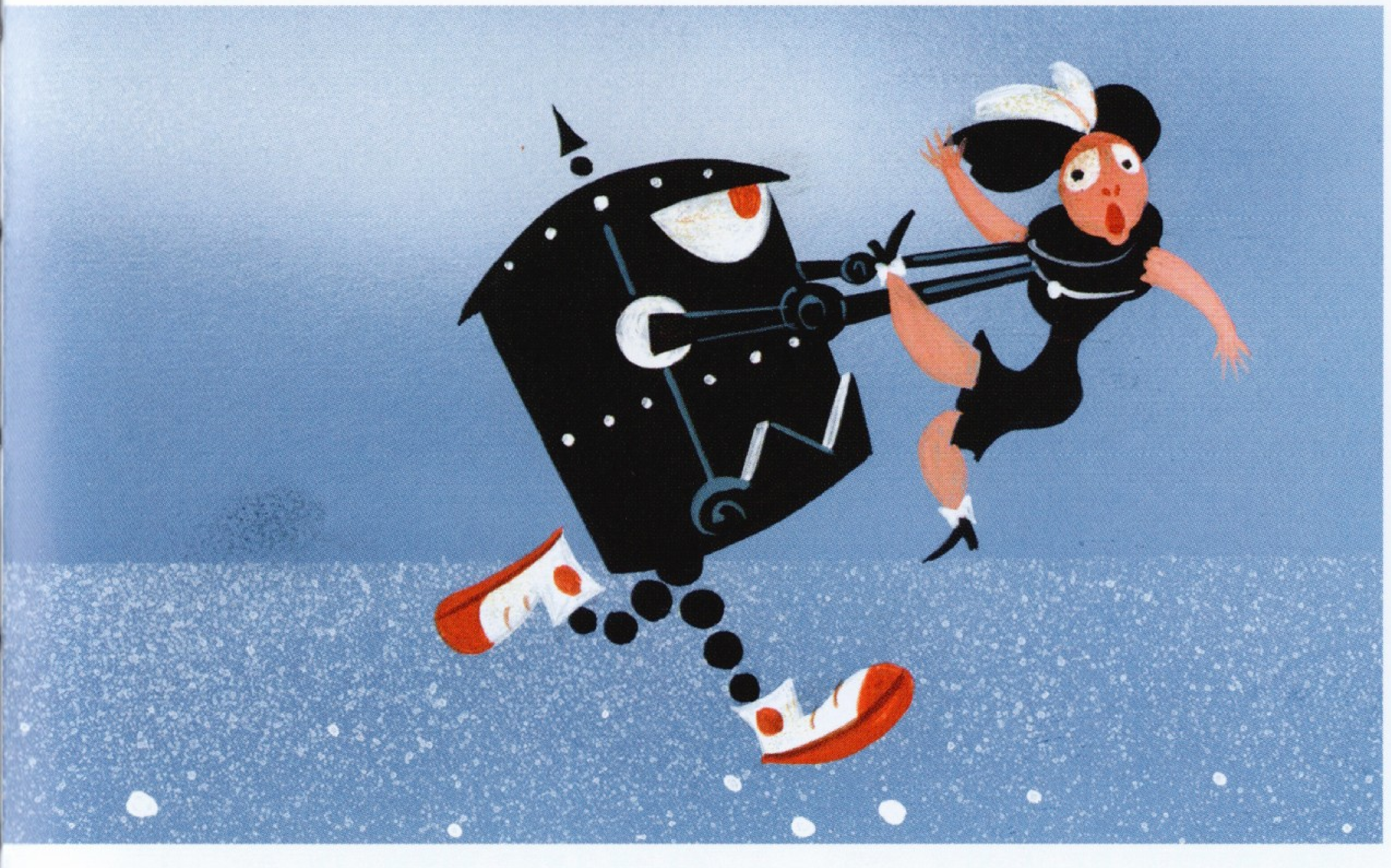


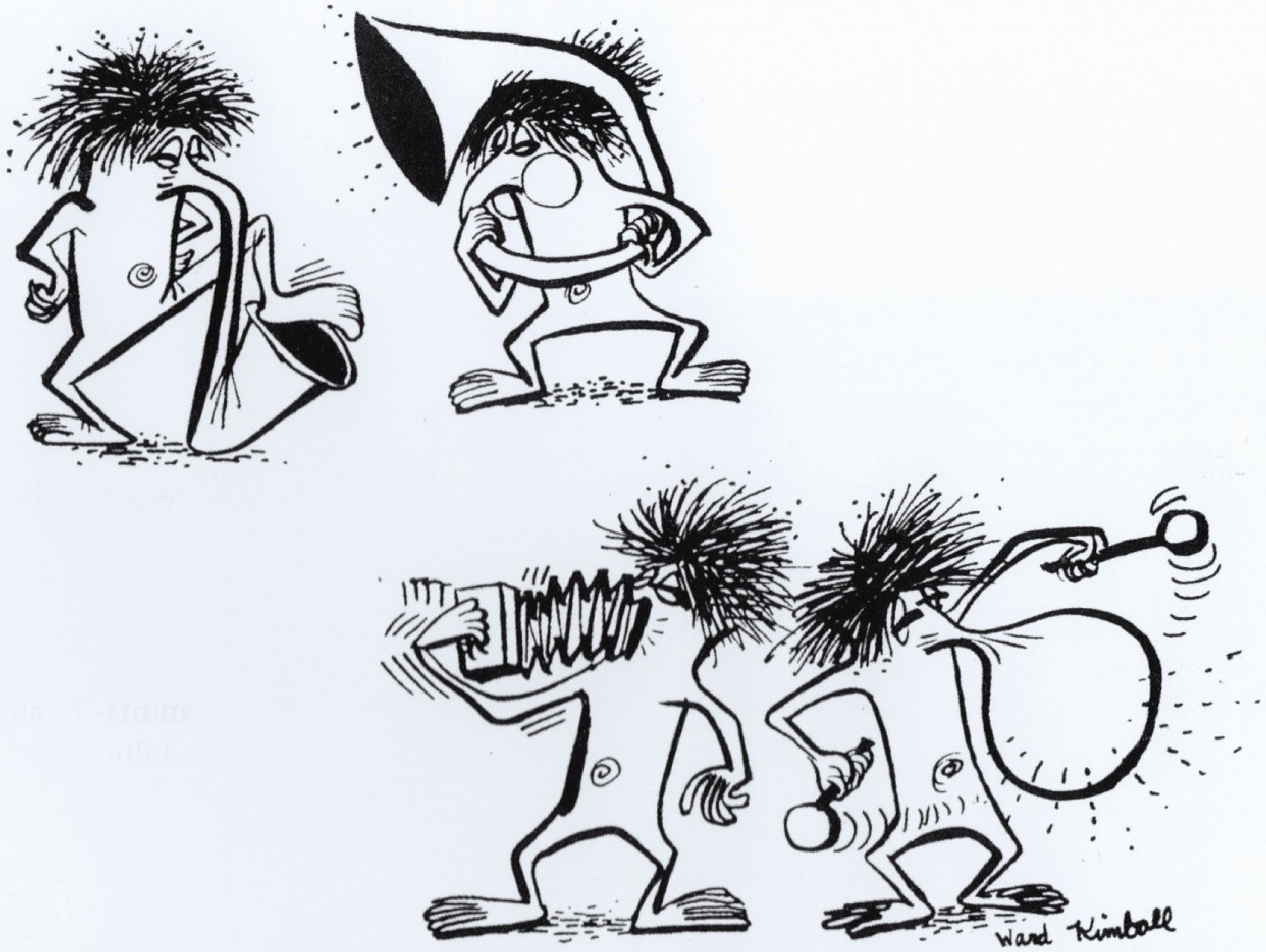
MARS AND BEYOND (1957)
Director: Ward Kimball
Right: Background painting
Opposite: Color styling concepts by unknown artists; character concepts by Ward Kimball

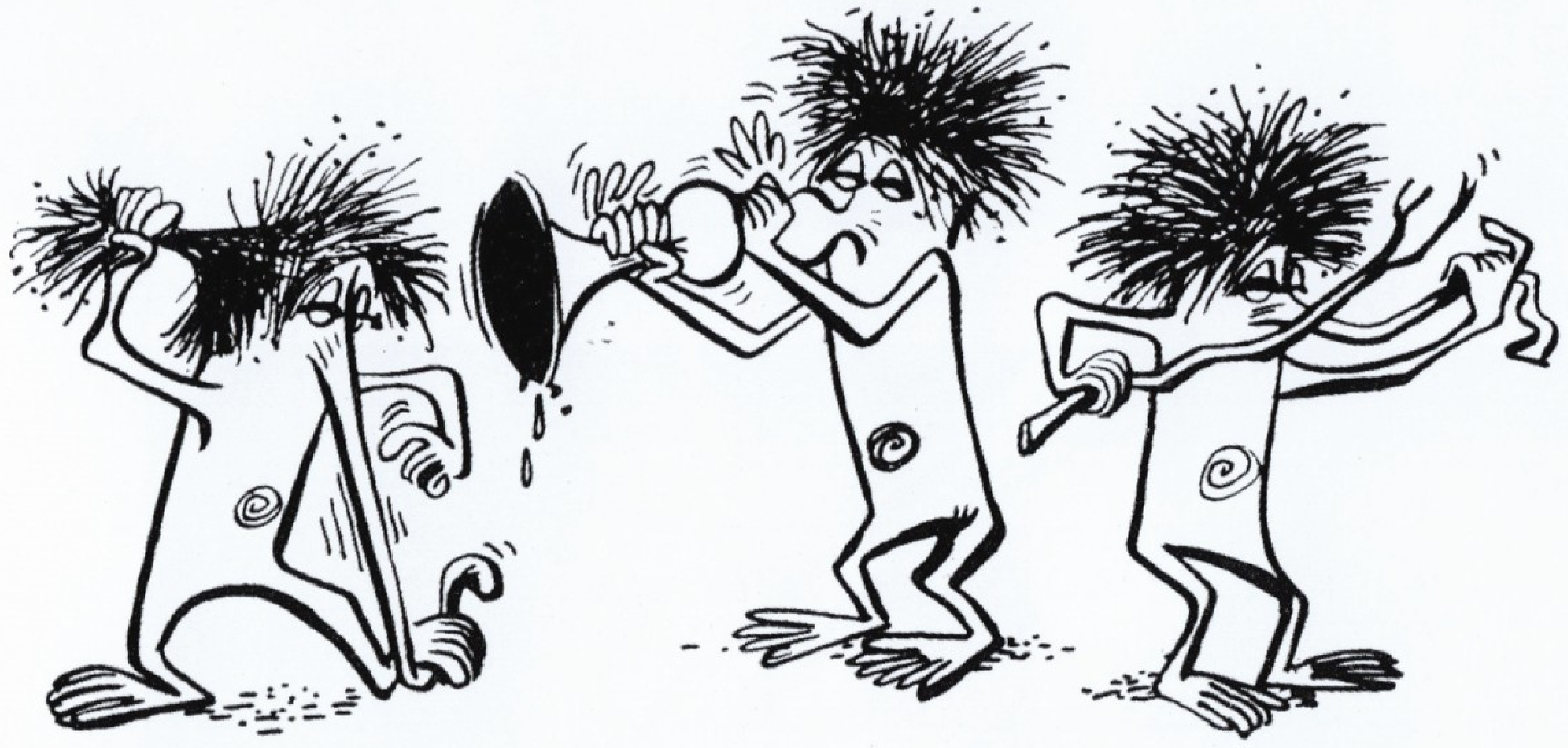


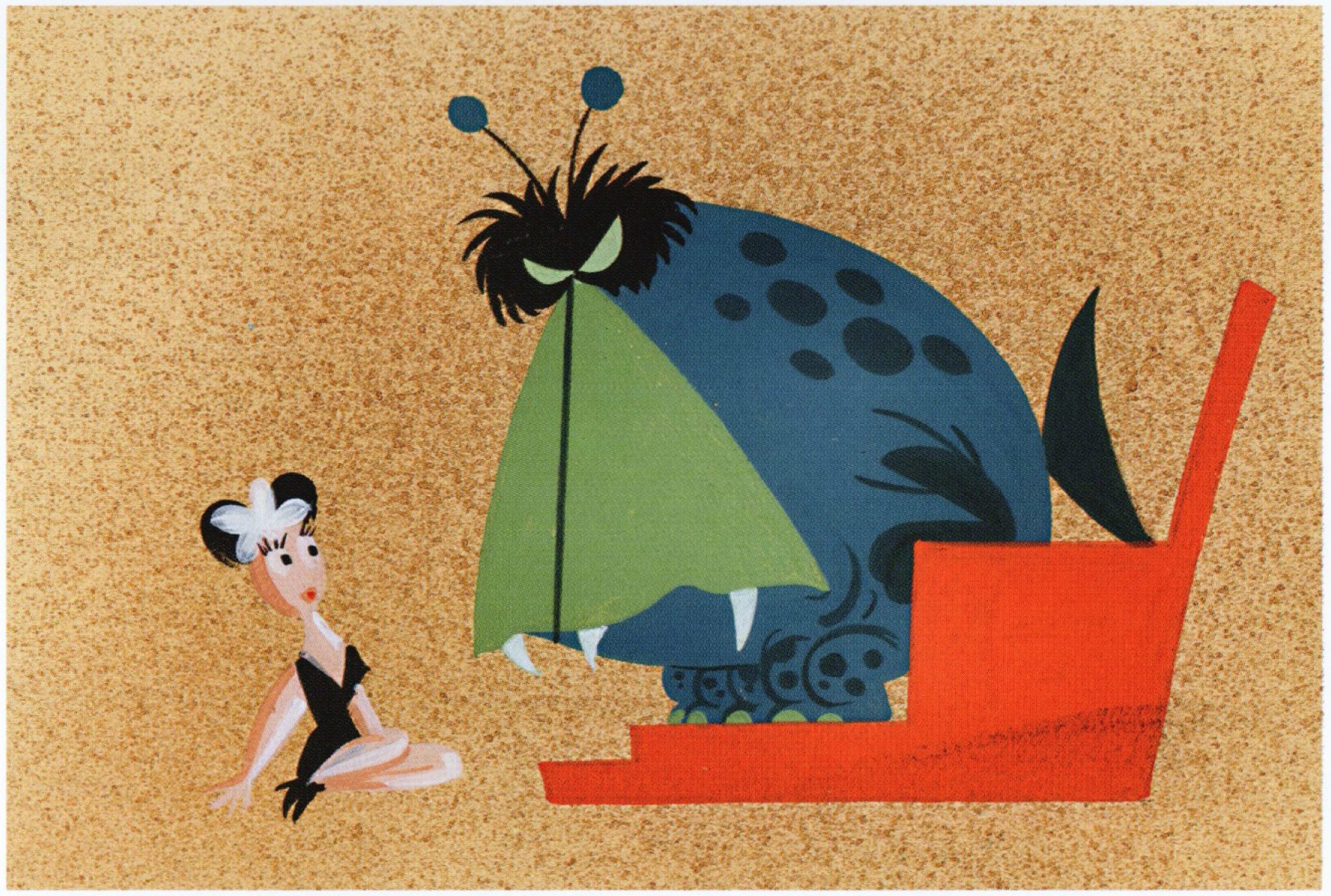
MAN AND THE MOON (1955)
Director: Ward Kimball
Film stills

A brilliant animation sequence from the film with highly stylized, yet expressive, mouth shapes.

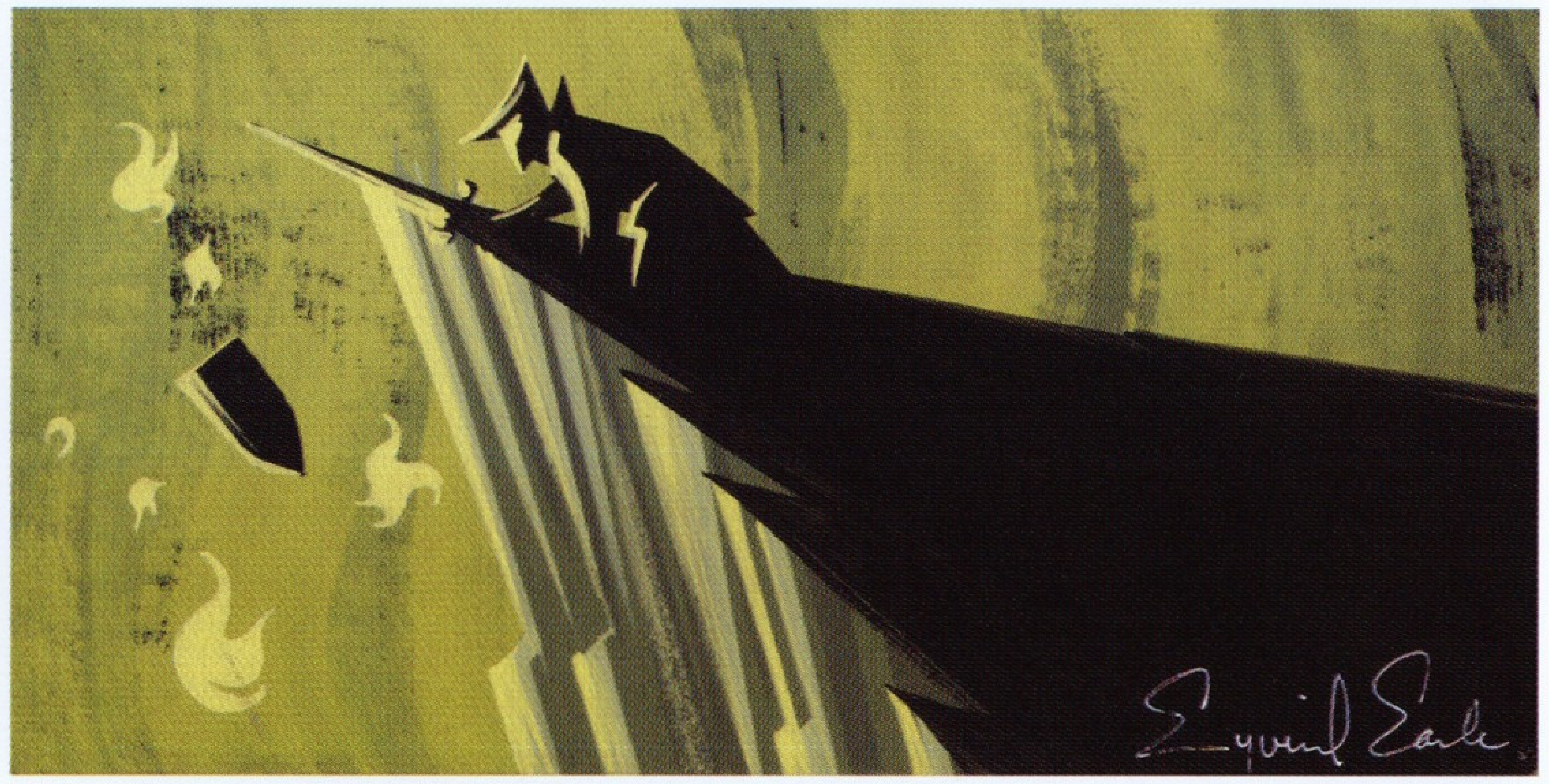


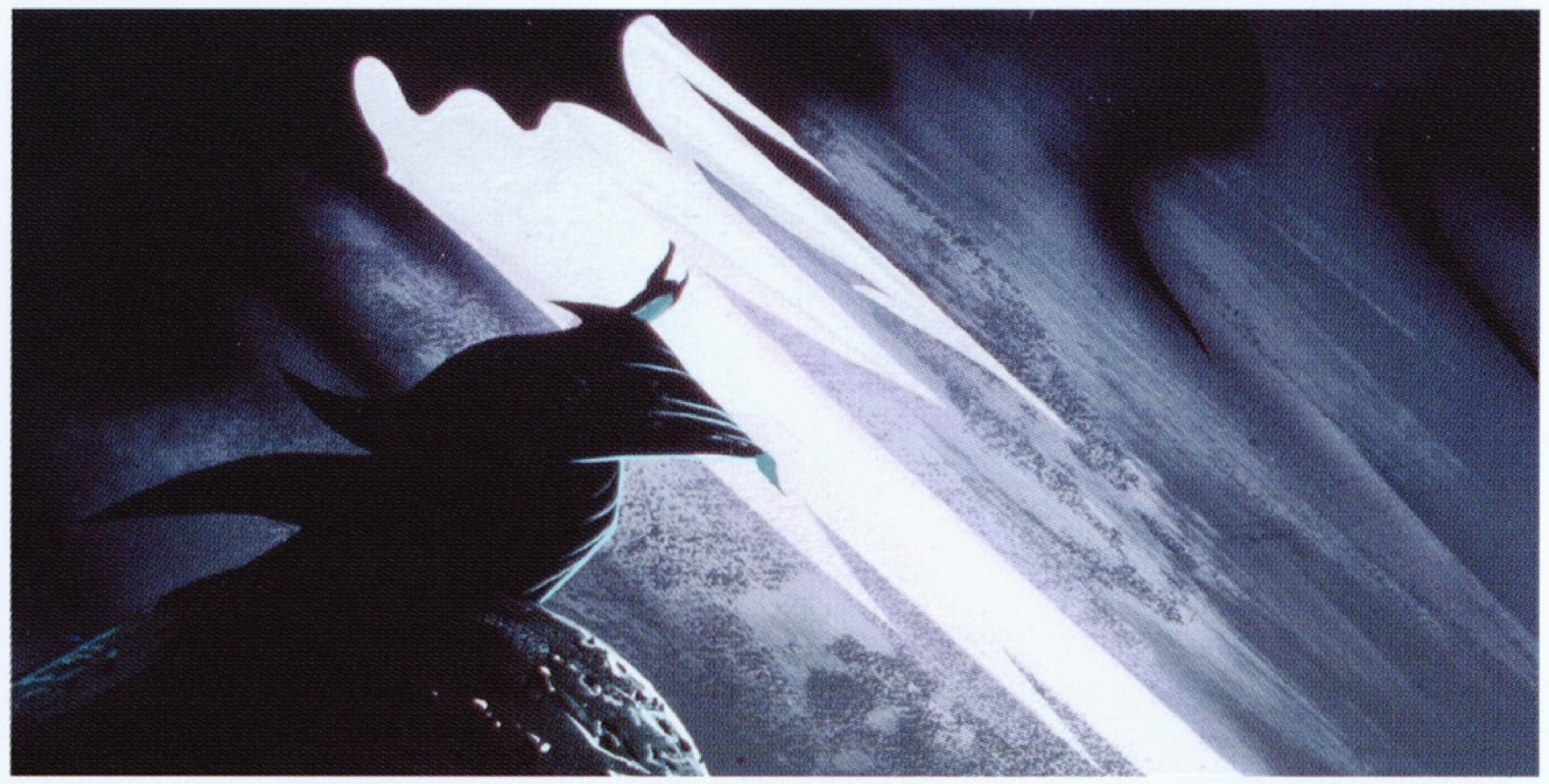

Ward Kimball





Eyvind Earle


Eyvind Earle



EYVIND EARLE AND *SLEEPING BEAUTY*

Eyvind Earle (1916–2000) is an anomaly in the world of animation design. He brought a modern look to Disney cartoons in the 1950s, yet his most ambitious assignment of the decade—the color and background styling of *Sleeping Beauty* (1959)—was rooted as much in the classical arts as it was in contemporary design. By his own admission, Earle had difficulties with life drawing; his draftsmanship paled in comparison to his father's, an accomplished academic realist painter who possessed a thorough knowledge of drawing. What he learned from his father, though, were the technical aspects of painting, which Earle adapted to a more impressionistic style that suggested moods and atmosphere.

Earle was a relatively mature thirty-five years old when he began working at Disney in 1951. He had been producing distinctively styled Christmas cards for the American Artists Group since 1947, and it was these cards that caught the eye of Disney artist John Hench, who opened the door for Earle's entry into the animation industry. Having worked for so long on his own, Earle had developed a highly individual painting style that was not rooted in any of the conventions of traditional animation background painting. His backgrounds, which were flat and angular and utilized a sophisticated sense of color, jarred on more than one occasion with the traditional Disney characters that were in front (*For Whom The Bulls Toil*, 1953, and *Grand Canyonscope*, 1954, are such examples). His backgrounds, however, worked well for the studio's graphically advanced pictures like *Toot Whistle Plunk and Boom*, *Pigs Is Pigs*, *Paul Bunyan*, and *The World Beneath Us*.

The most important assignment of Earle's nascent animation career came in the mid-1950s, when he was put in charge of art directing *Sleeping Beauty*. His promotion was a directive of Walt Disney, who had been frustrated that his feature films lacked distinctive styling. "For years and years I have been hiring artists like Mary Blair to design the styling of a feature, and by the time the picture is finished, there is hardly a trace of the original styling left," Disney reportedly said at a meeting. "This time Eyvind Earle is styling *Sleeping Beauty* and that's the way it's going to be!" Earle's earlier background paintings on the short films did not influence the character designs greatly, but on *Sleeping Beauty*, the animators would be forced to conform their character designs to Earle's opulently detailed backgrounds. Tom Oreb was brought aboard as the film's character stylist to help devise a look that would be compatible with Earle's backgrounds.

Earle's early concept paintings for *Sleeping Beauty* were very different from what eventually appeared on screen. Art director Gordon Legg described them as "very stagy, very dramatic setups where most of it would be just a flat color, and then there'd be this one streak of light in there, and in there, there'd be this intricate detail. The stuff was just terrific." But as the film progressed, there was a gradual shift toward a more embroidered, ornate approach, partly at the urging of John Hench, who had been inspired by the medieval-era unicorn tapestries he had seen at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art. Earle's tapestrylike approach was also informed by other classical sources like Dürer, Van Eyck, Breughel, and the illustrated manuscript *Très Riches Heures de Jean, Duc de Berri*.

Earle elaborated further on his design choices for the film in his autobiography, *Horizon Bound on a Bicycle*:

> *And since it's obvious that the Gothic style and detail evolved from the Arabic influence acquired during the Crusades, I found it perfectly permissible to use all the wonderful patterns and details found in Persian miniatures. And since Persian miniatures had a lot in common with Chinese and Japanese art, I felt it was OK for me to inject quite a bit of Japanese art, especially in the closeups of leaves and overhanging branches.*

The film's finished backgrounds vacillate between visual grandeur and gaudiness. There are multiple layers of detail in every painting, as if there were a competition between the background painters to see who could use up more of the studio's paint. A painting demonstration that Earle produced for the background department shows how he encouraged the artists to paint multiple layers of detail to depict simple objects like trees, with each successive painting pass effectively obscuring the interesting designed shapes in the previous layers. Ward Kimball described Earle's work as "a style of over-designing," and art director Gordon Legg commented, "When the backgrounds came out, it was just solid embroidery. There was not a quiet place [in the paintings]." Earle left the studio in March of 1958 and became the art director of the John Sutherland industrial film *Rhapsody of Steel*, where he gave an encore presentation of his *Sleeping Beauty* stylistic extravagances. In the early 1960s, he left animation permanently and established a highly successful career creating serigraphs and paintings for the gallery market.

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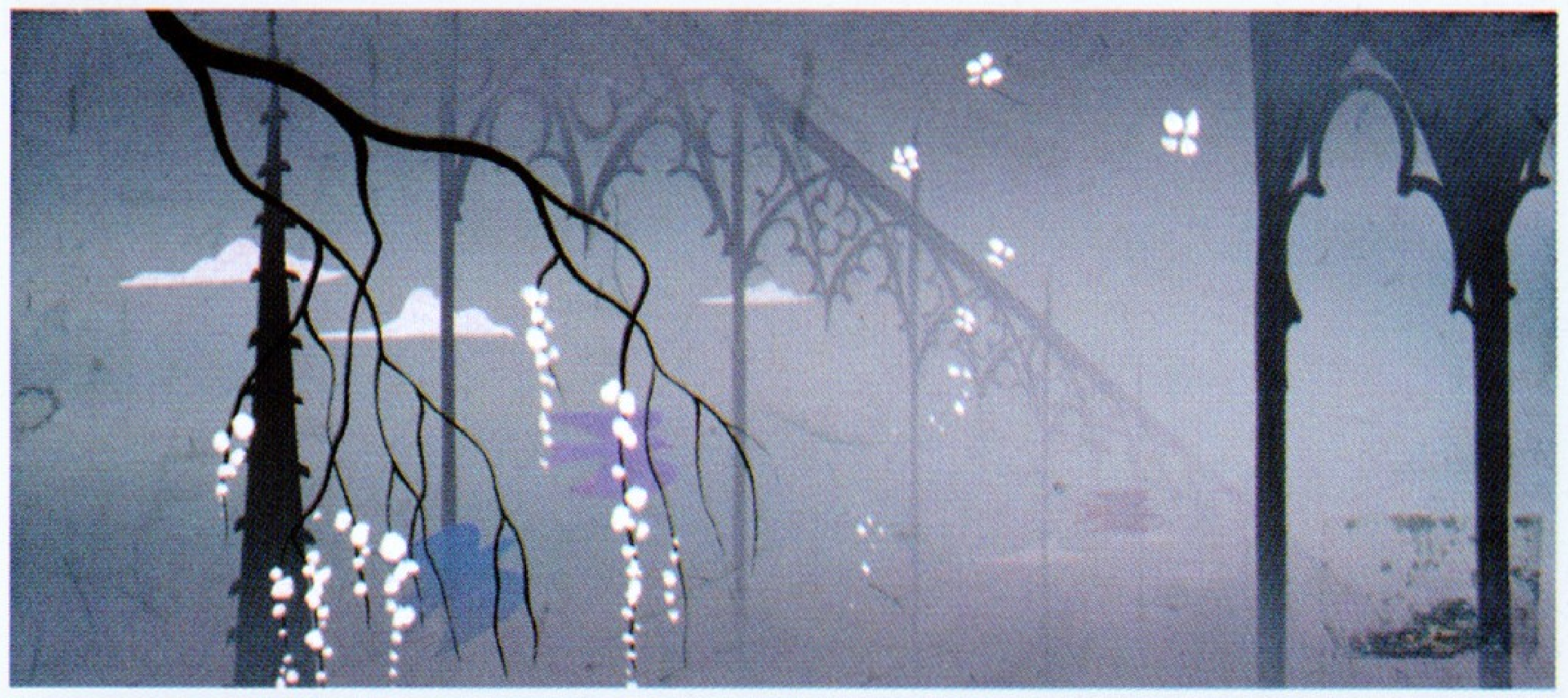
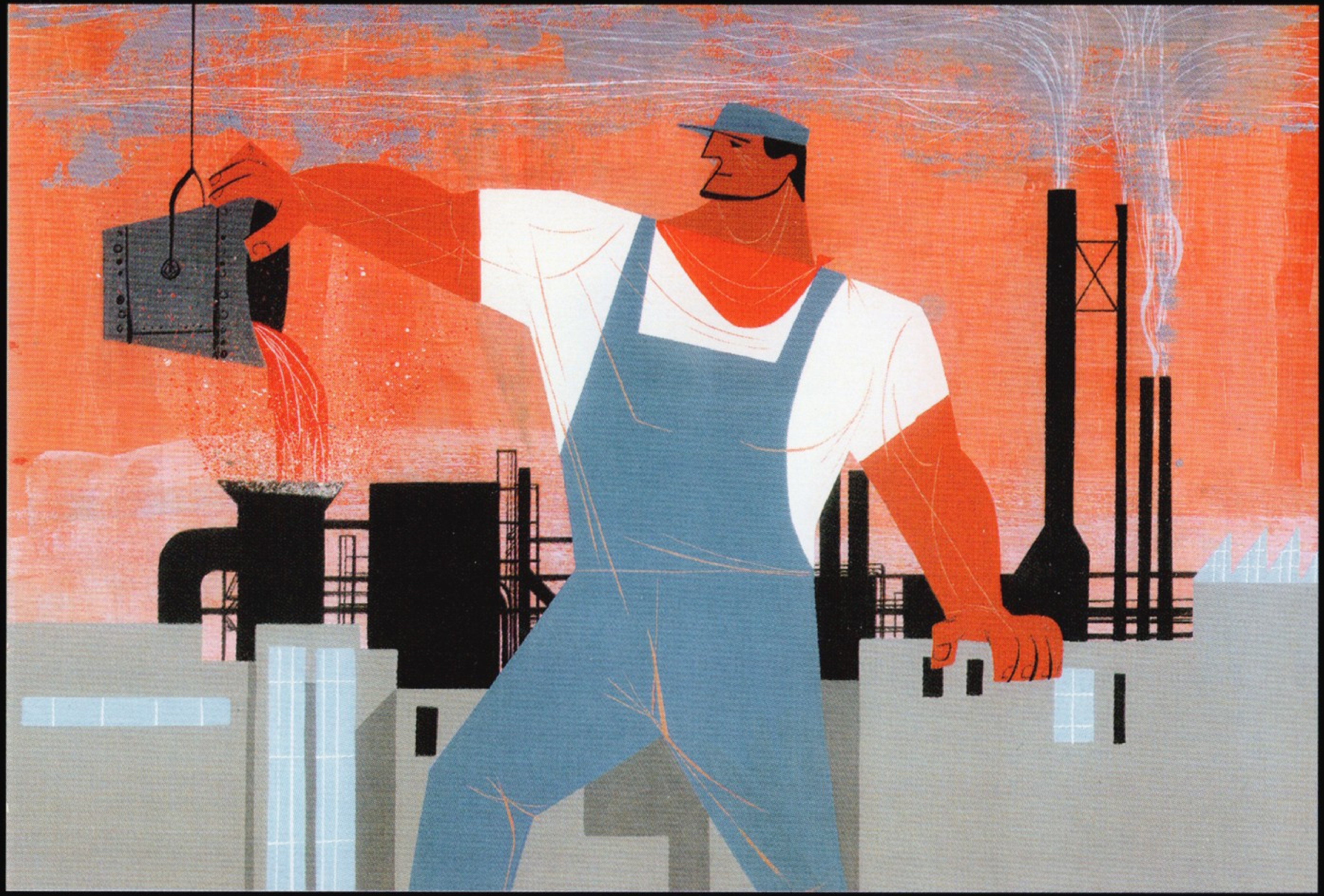
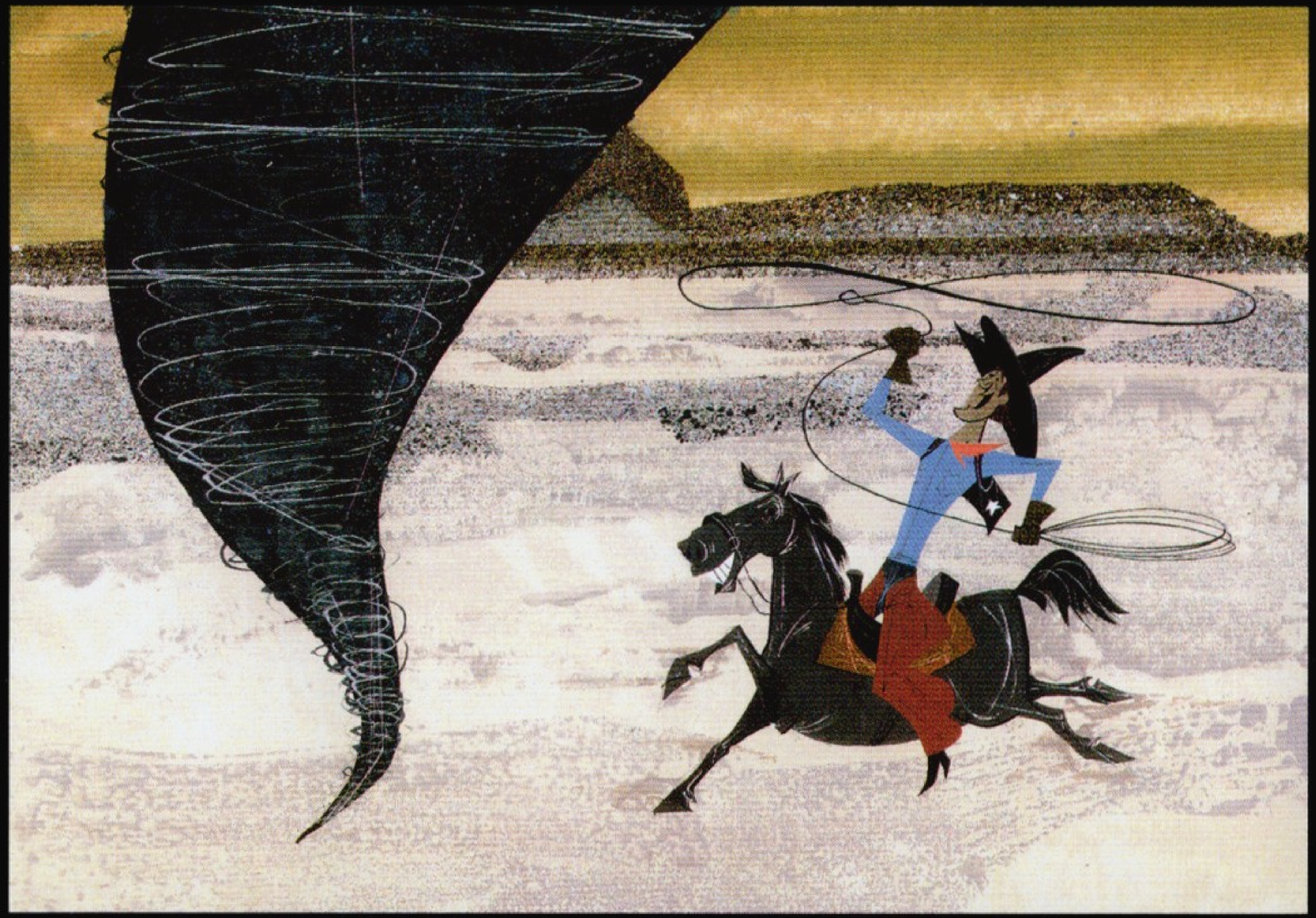
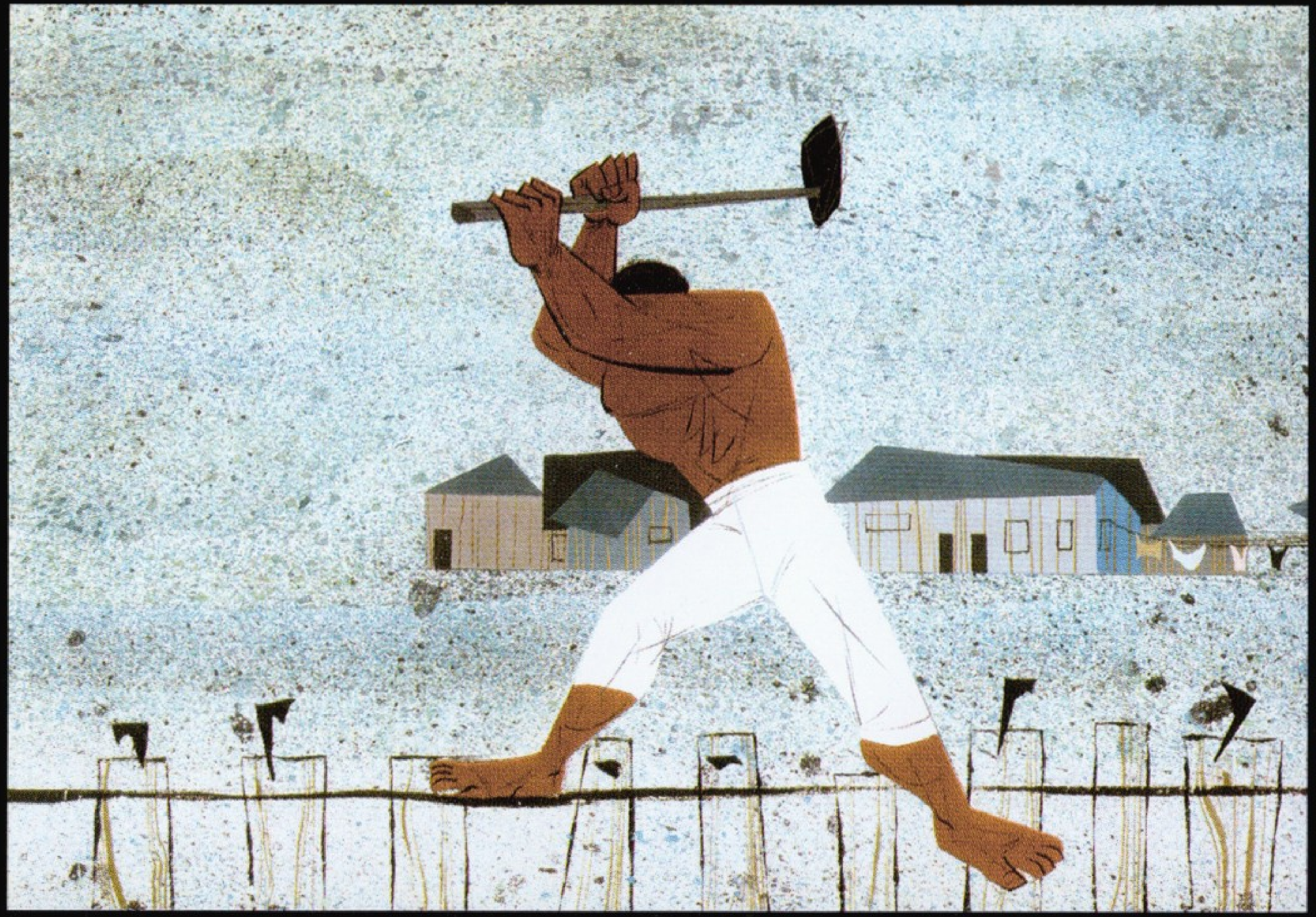
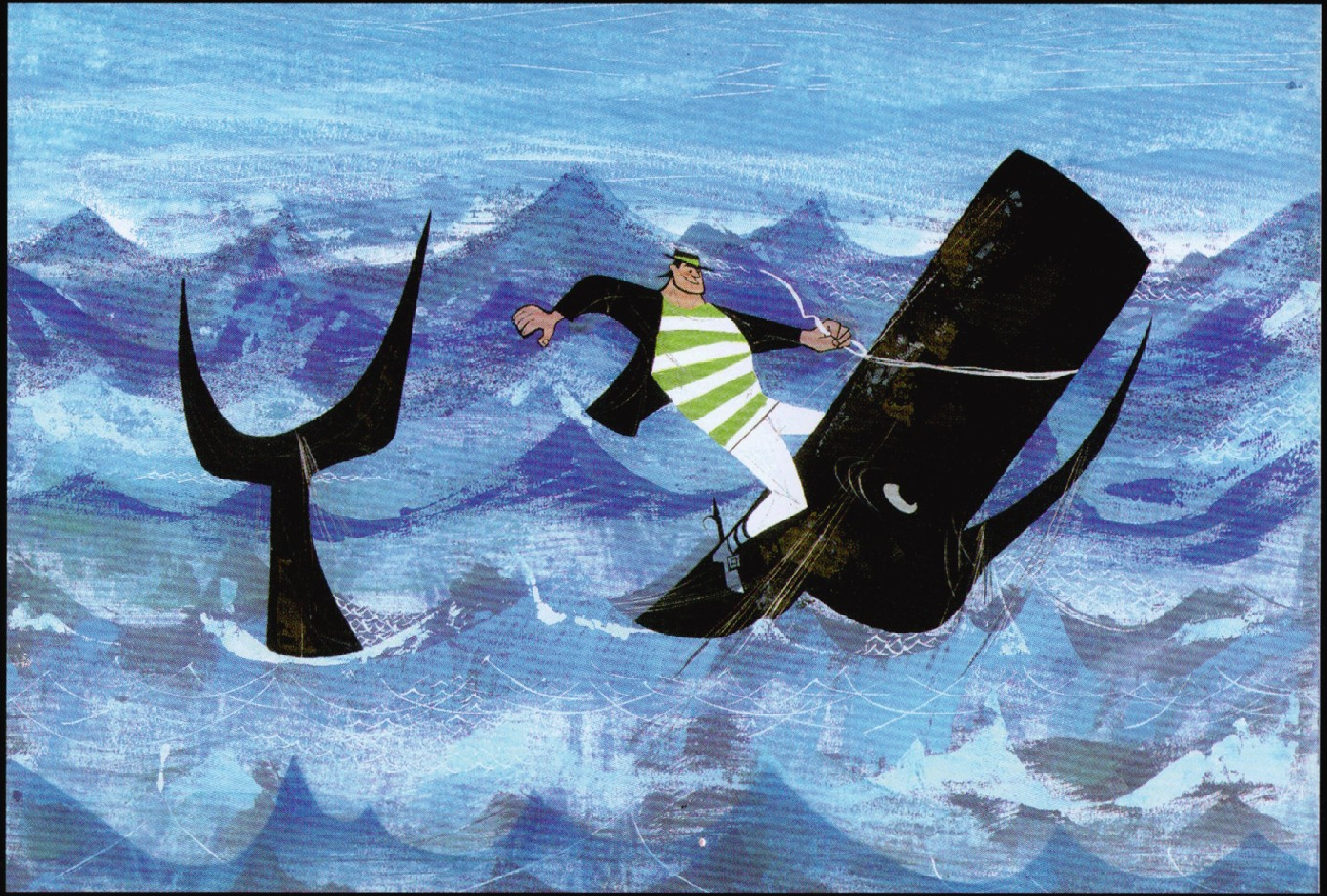
***SLEEPING BEAUTY* (1959)**
Director: Clyde Geronimi
Concept paintings by Eyvind Earle



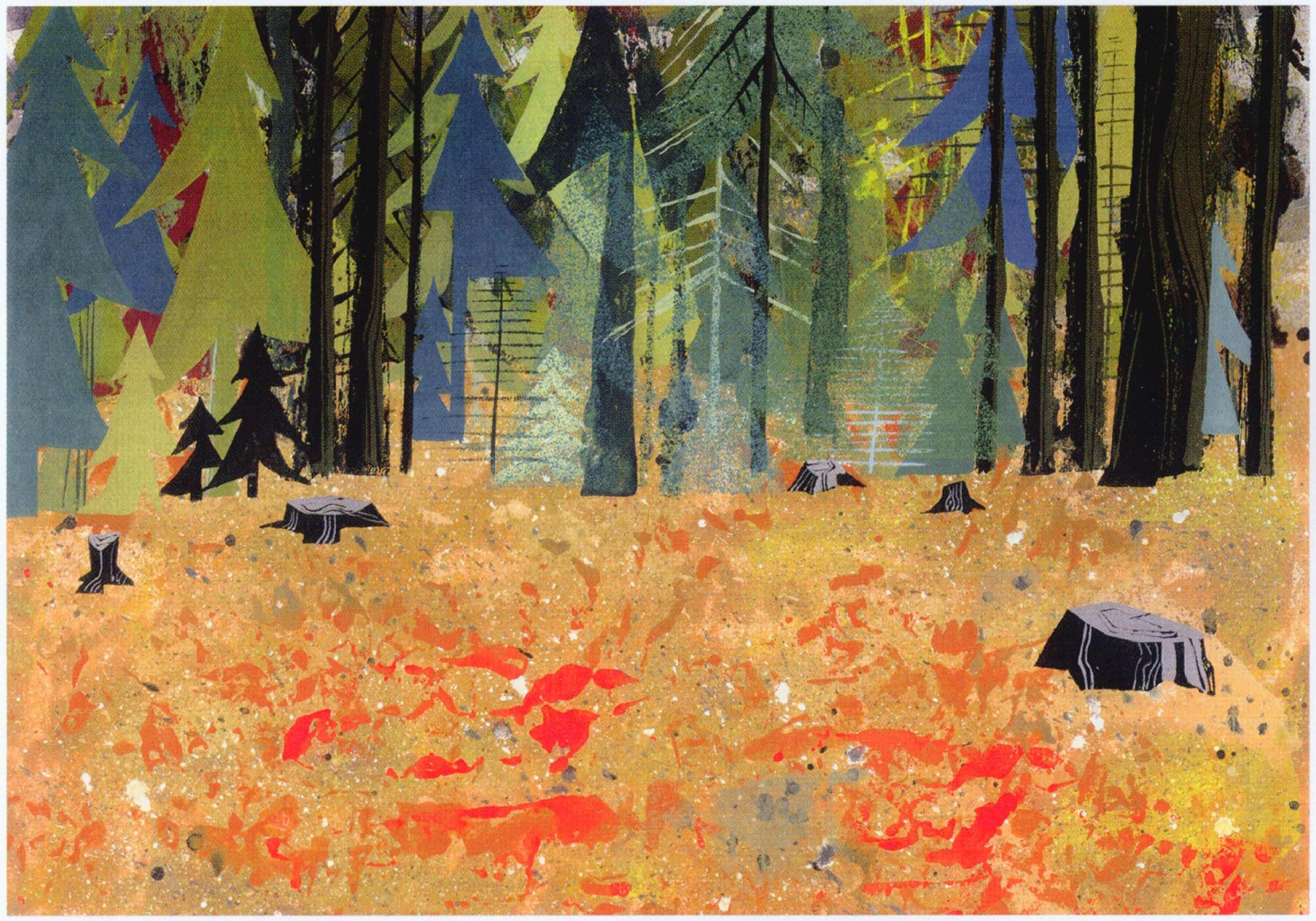




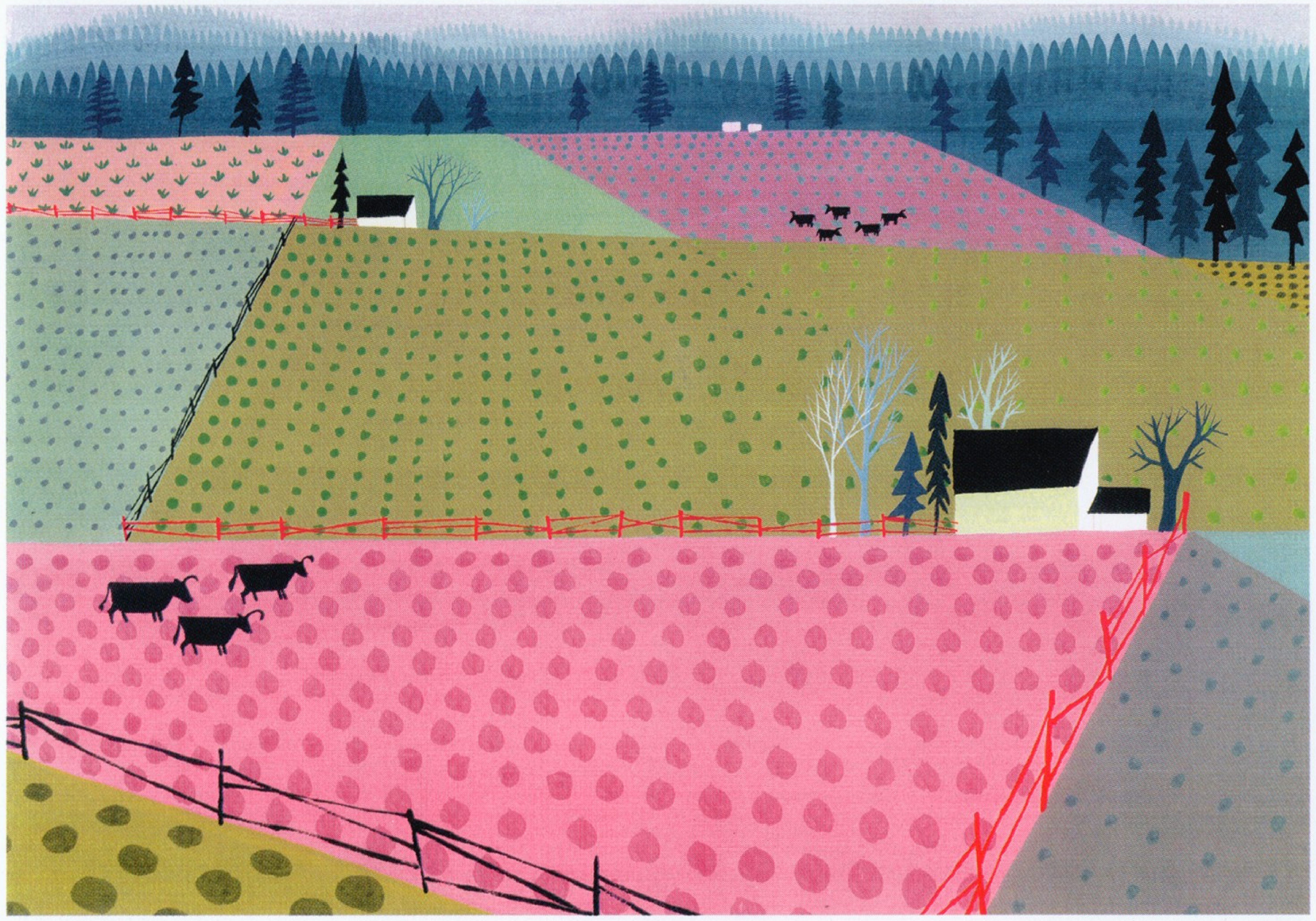




Paul Bunyan **(1958)**
Director: Les Clark
Background paintings
by Walt Peregoy



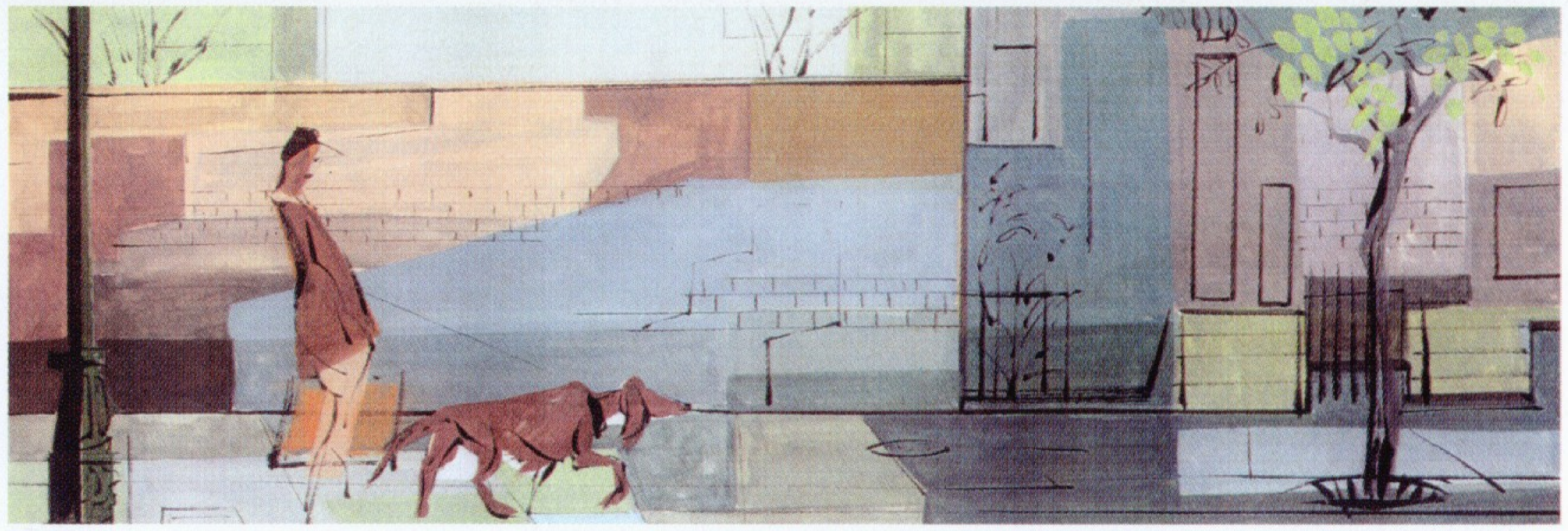
PAUL BUNYAN (1958)
Director: Les Clark
Background painting
by Walt Peregoy



PAUL BUNYAN (1958)
Director: Les Clark
Background painting
by Eyvind Earle

PAUL BUNYAN

Paul Bunyan (1958) was one of the studio's most stylized efforts, but it is a film whose parts are better than the whole. The film's character designs, by Tom Oreb, were languidly animated; Oreb's designs required a director more like Ward Kimball, someone who understood that stylized characters demanded stylized movement. A far more successful aspect of the film is its backgrounds, which featured a pairing of two of the studio's most distinctive background stylists: Eyvind Earle and Walt Peregoy. Earle's and Peregoy's ideas about background styling could not be more different, as evidenced in their respective work on *Sleeping Beauty* and *101 Dalmatians*, but in *Paul Bunyan*, their work meshes into a handsome synthesis of both their styles. Earle, who was the film's color stylist, retreated from his excesses of *Sleeping Beauty* and returned to his past handsome, flat background styling. Peregoy followed Earle's color schemes, but his background painting technique was far more painterly and used a lot of textural effects and paint-splatter techniques.



WALT PEREGOY AND *101 DALMATIANS*

Though *101 Dalmatians* wasn't released until January 1961, production on the film began in 1958, and its visual direction had been established long before the decade was over. The film not only represents the culmination of the Disney studio's drive toward Modernism but it's also one of the most brazen shifts in aesthetic sensibility during the studio's history. Whereas the world of *Sleeping Beauty* was largely the creation of a single individual—Eyvind Earle—*101 Dalmatians* is a graphic collaboration between numerous artists. All the artists at the studio who yearned to break from the Disney mold, from storyman Bill Peet to animator Marc Davis, finally found the opportunity with this film to create something that was thoroughly contemporary in conception and modern in execution. Foremost among these individuals was Ken Anderson (1909–1993), the film's art director and production designer. Anderson wanted a style that would capture the energy and spirit of the film's modern-day London setting; romanticized Disney backgrounds weren't going to cut it. He found the graphic solution by proposing a radical change in the filmmaking process.

Anderson came up with the idea of using Xerox technology to transfer the animators' pencil drawings directly onto cels. Up until that time, the xerography process had been used sparingly in animated productions. (UPA had notably employed Xerox for some of their shorts for *The Boing Boing Show.*) The idea appealed to Walt Disney because it eliminated the costly inking process—traditionally, the inking department laboriously traced the animators' drawings onto cels, using a variety of colored ink lines that matched the colors of the areas they were encompassing. Anderson's reasons for using Xerox were not merely economic though. He planned to apply the same Xerox process to the film's backgrounds as well. In other words, background paintings would be created on two separate layers. The layout artists' background drawings would be transferred to cels via Xerox and positioned over painted swatches of color created by the background painters. "There was no attempt to disguise the lines," said Anderson. The use of bold black Xerox lines in both character (foreground) and setting (background) created a harmonious visual relationship that was unprecedented in the Disney films.

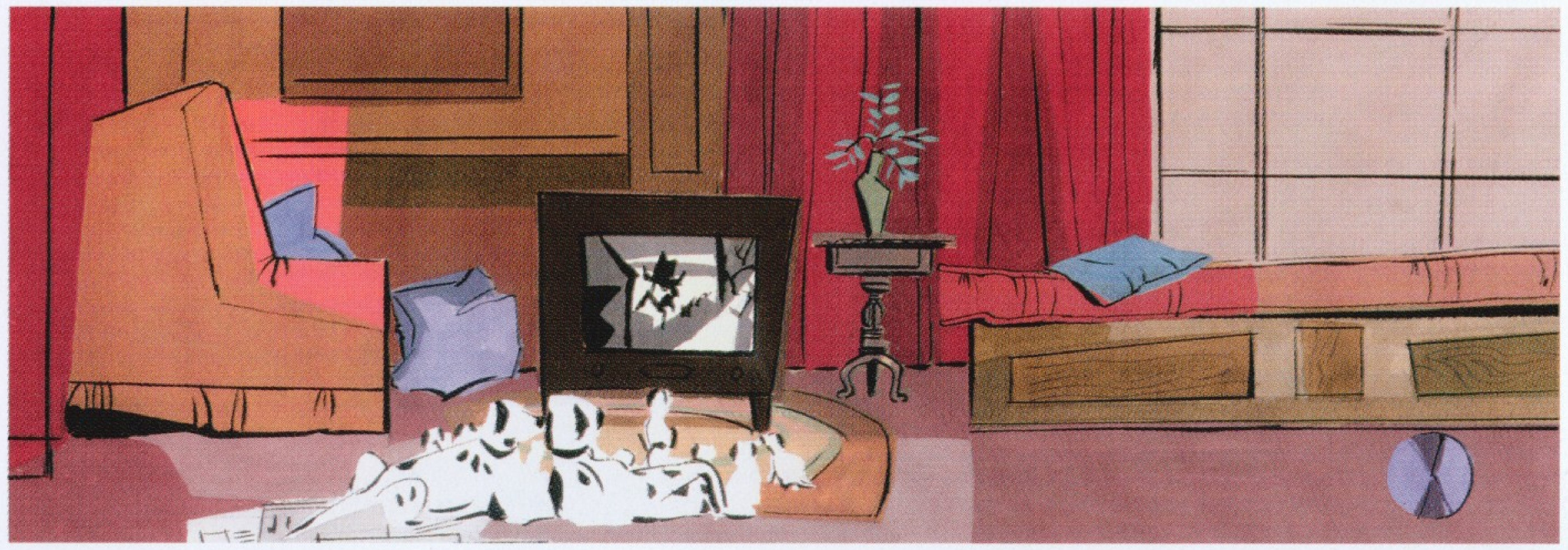
In the late 1950s, Walt Disney was consumed by his work on the Disneyland theme park, and his involvement in *101 Dalmatians* was minimal. He trusted studio veteran Anderson to art direct the film using the unconventional Xerox process, but he regretted the results. In fact, Disney hated the look of the film so much that he didn't speak to Anderson for a year following the film's release. Anderson, feeling the heat of Disney's wrath, suffered two strokes in 1962—the steep price of Modernism at Disney. He recalled years later why Disney was so disappointed with the film, which, incidentally, was a huge financial success for the studio:

> *Walt was one who inherently hated lines. He hated to see a drawing on a screen . . . he was a frustrated actor. Every line was a soft line and he was doing his level best to make it like live action . . . so he was very upset when he saw what was happening on* Dalmatians. *However, we had gone so far and it was coming off well . . . but I didn't find out he didn't buy it until it was all over. Had it all done. Then I found out that he was extremely displeased with it.*

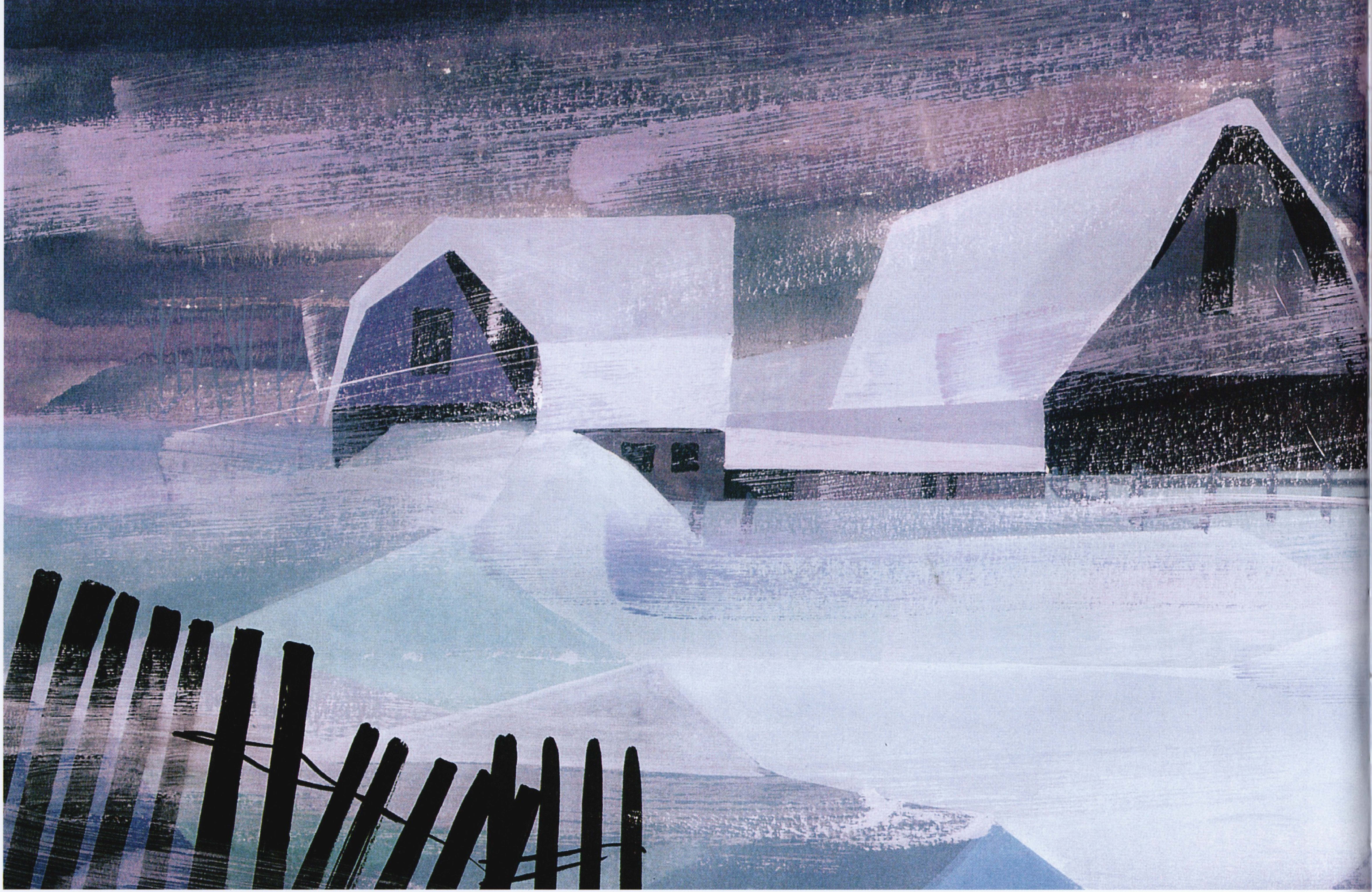
The separation of line and color in the backgrounds meant that the illusion of depth would have to be created primarily by line, with less dependence on the traditional play of light and shadow in painting. It was therefore necessary to devise a drawing style in which lines conveyed as much dimensionality as possible. Ernie Nordli (1912–1968), who is one of three artists on the film credited with "layout styling," was a key player in developing the film's background drawing style. According to layout artist Ray Aragon, Nordli's style consisted of drawing the background elements with variegated line widths to create contrasts that would heighten the illusion of depth. Additionally, objects that demanded emphasis in the layout would be drawn with multiple outlines (a thick line would be supported by thinner lines running alongside it). Nordli's layout styling served not only a functional purpose but was also a decorative design element that added greatly to the overall look and feel of the film.

Another bold design element in *101 Dalmatians* is its free, inventive use of color. This was the work of color stylist Walt Peregoy (b. 1925), who had already demonstrated his singular approach to color and background painting on the featurette *Paul Bunyan*. "Peregoy in the 1950s was a true 'Modernist'—a talented fine art painter who brought Modernism to Disney with strong abstractions in both layout and painting technique," says contemporary art director Michael Giaimo (*Pocahontas*). "His work was a purer abstraction of reality as opposed to, say, the beautifully designed but more grounded work of Eyvind Earle."

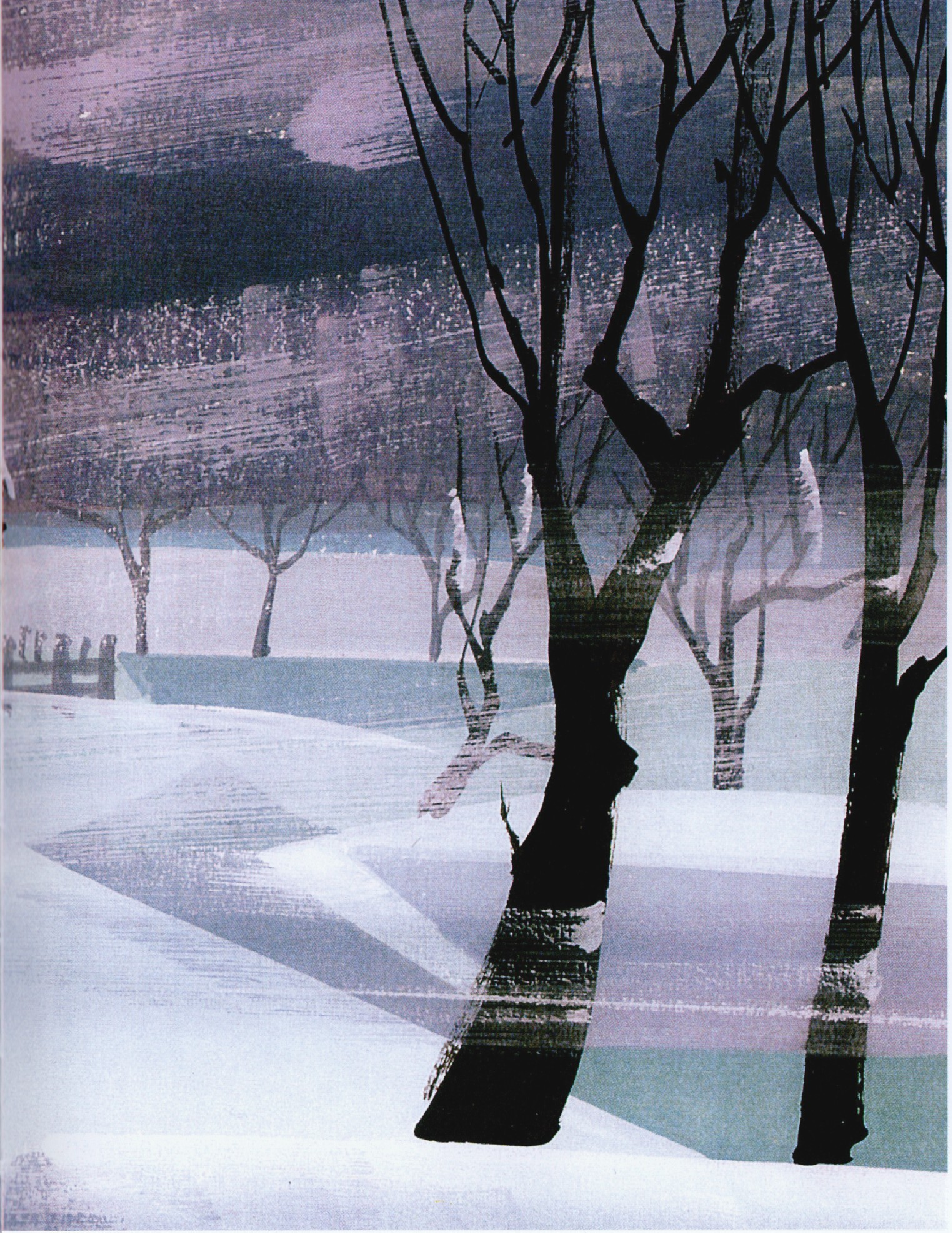
Rather than complacently filling in the Xerox lines with different colors, Peregoy took a broader, more evocative approach to the color styling. Because so many of the descriptive details were already contained within the line drawing, he could paint "deliberately with the awareness that it was



***101 Dalmatians* (1961)**
Directors: Clyde Geronimi, Wolfgang Reitherman, Hamilton Luske
Above and left: Color styling concepts by Walt Peregoy
Opposite: Film still



Above and opposite: ***101 Dalmatians* (1961)**
Directors: Clyde Geronimi, Wolfgang
Reitherman, Hamilton Luske
Color styling concepts by Walt Peregoy

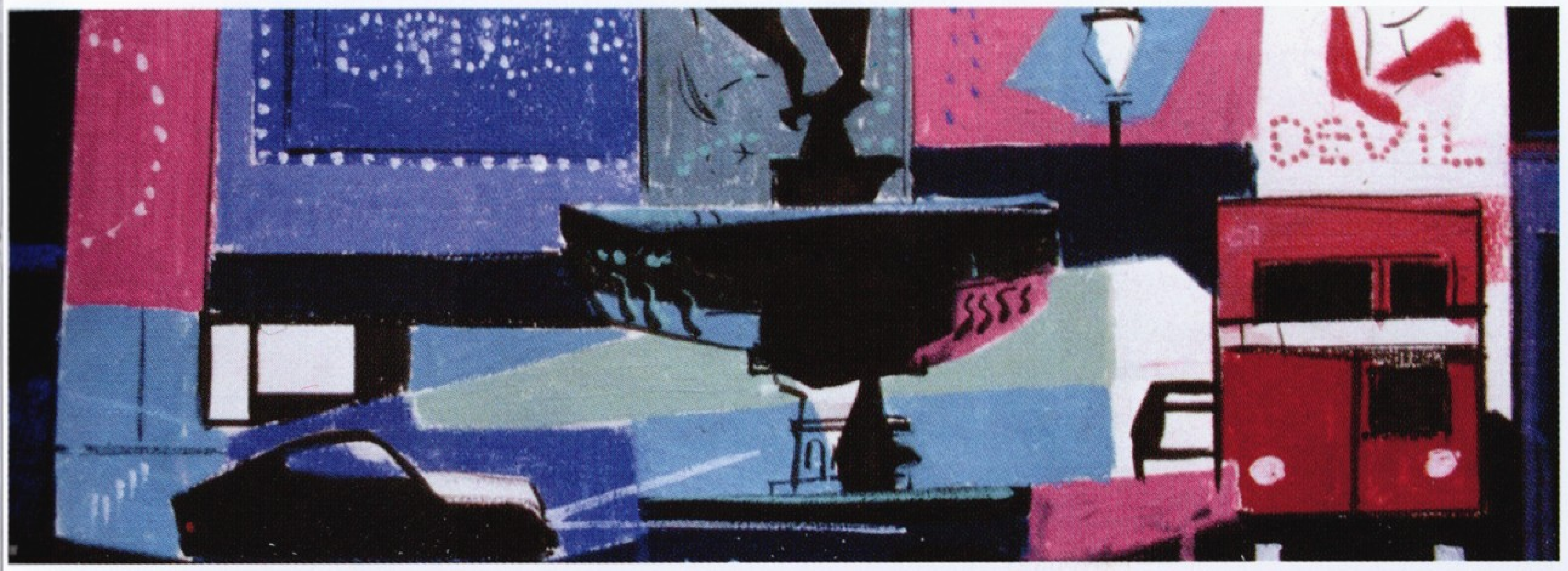


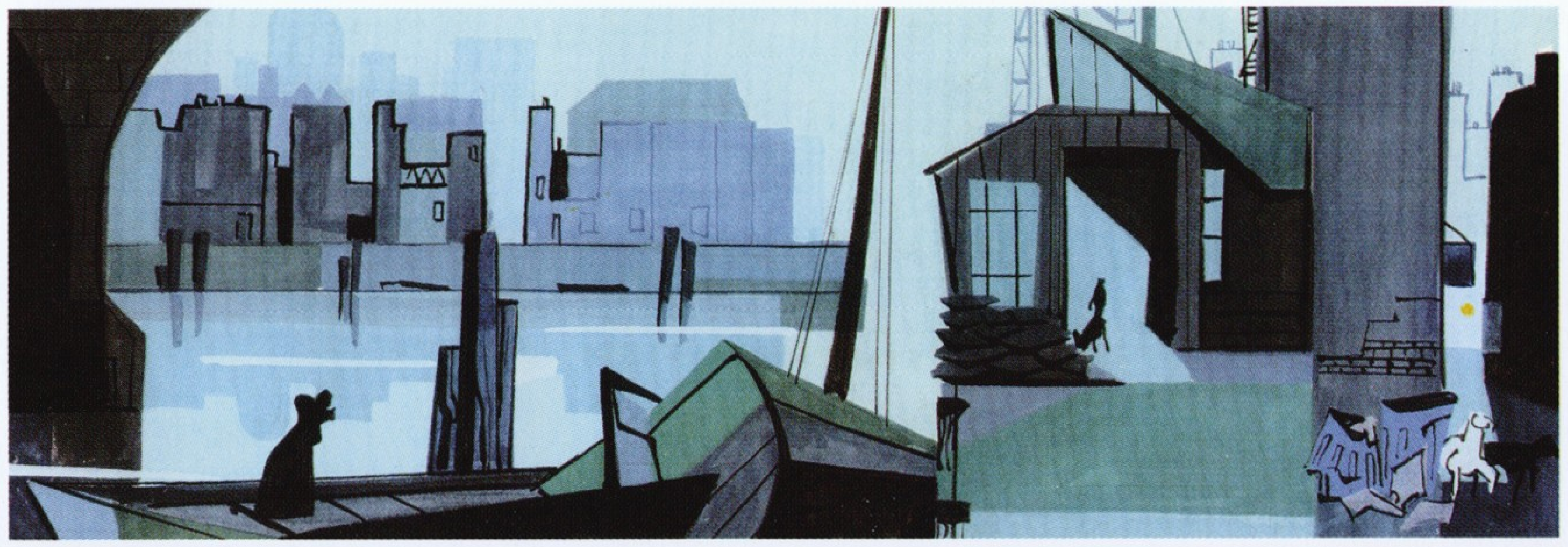
not necessary to go in and render the hell out of a doorknob, or a piece of glass, or a tree." Peregoy composed scenes with large planes of flat colors that only loosely follow the layout artists' line drawings.

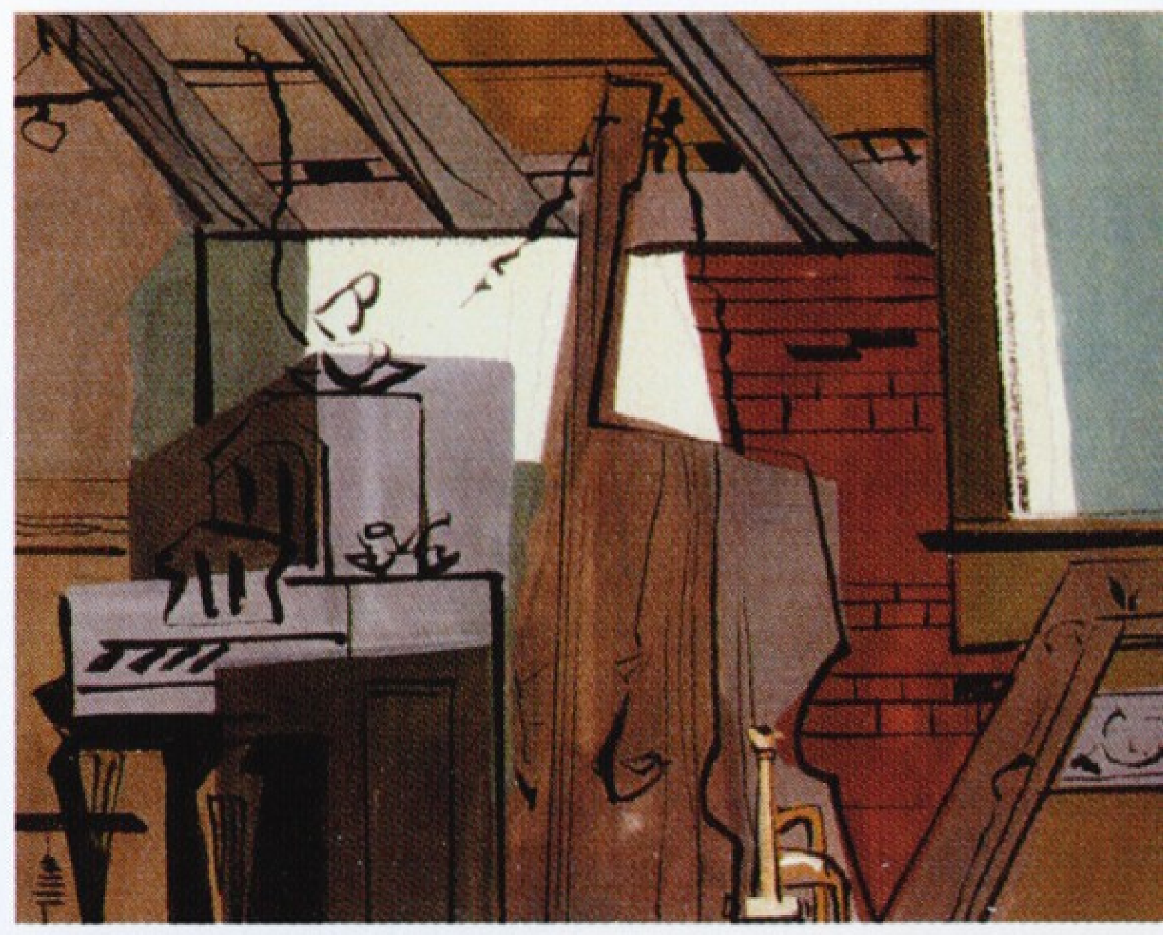
A clear example of Peregoy's approach is seen at the beginning of the film, where various figures are seen walking in front of a brick wall. In Peregoy's concept painting, he doesn't render the wall or sidewalk with realistic details but, rather, uses flat areas of color purely to suggest mood and a sense of place. The interlocking swatches of color bear more than a passing resemblance to the paintings of the Abstract Expressionist school of the 1950s. Via Peregoy, Disney had finally met Rothko and Motherwell. In another notable sequence in the film, wherein the dalmatians are fighting Cruella De Vil's henchmen Horace and Jasper, all the backgrounds are keyed in bright glowing reds and oranges; the visual impact is one of tense excitement as the colors engulf the line elements in the background.

Peregoy's career is almost as unique as his painting style. As a teenager, Peregoy had taken Saturday classes at Chouinard Art Institute. He dropped out of high school in the tenth grade and was seventeen years old when he was hired at Disney in 1943. He quit six months later because he felt the place was too much like a factory. Following a short stint as a cowhand on the Irvine Ranch and a tour with the Coast Guard during World War II, he moved to San Miguel Allende, Mexico, where he studied painting and sculpture "under the influence of [David Alfaro] Siqueiros, Diego Rivera and [José Clemente] Orozco." In the latter half of the 1940s, he spent three years in Paris studying painting. His sketchbooks at the time reflect the strong influence of Fernand Léger, and in fact, Léger offered to sign one of Peregoy's sketchbooks because he was so impressed with the young artist's work.

Peregoy was rehired at Disney in 1951, where he "started at the bottom again." Unlike other design-oriented layout and background artists at Disney, like Eyvind Earle and Victor Haboush, Peregoy spent a significant amount of time in the animation department. He worked for four years as an assistant animator and cleanup artist before Eyvind Earle recognized his painting skills and recruited him to be the first background painter on *Sleeping Beauty* in 1955. Peregoy's major assignments at Disney prior to being asked by Ken Anderson to color style *101 Dalmatians* were *Sleeping Beauty* and *Paul Bunyan*.







OTHER DISNEY FILMS

Other Disney films of the 1950s reflected various degrees of stylization, including *Pigs Is Pigs* (1954), *A Cowboy Needs a Horse* (1956), and *The Truth About Mother Goose* (1957). Of these films, Jack Kinney's *Pigs Is Pigs* came closest to matching Ward Kimball's driving contemporary vision, with inventively designed characters, strong background layouts by Bruce Bushman and John Wilson, and background paintings by Eyvind Earle and Al Dempster.

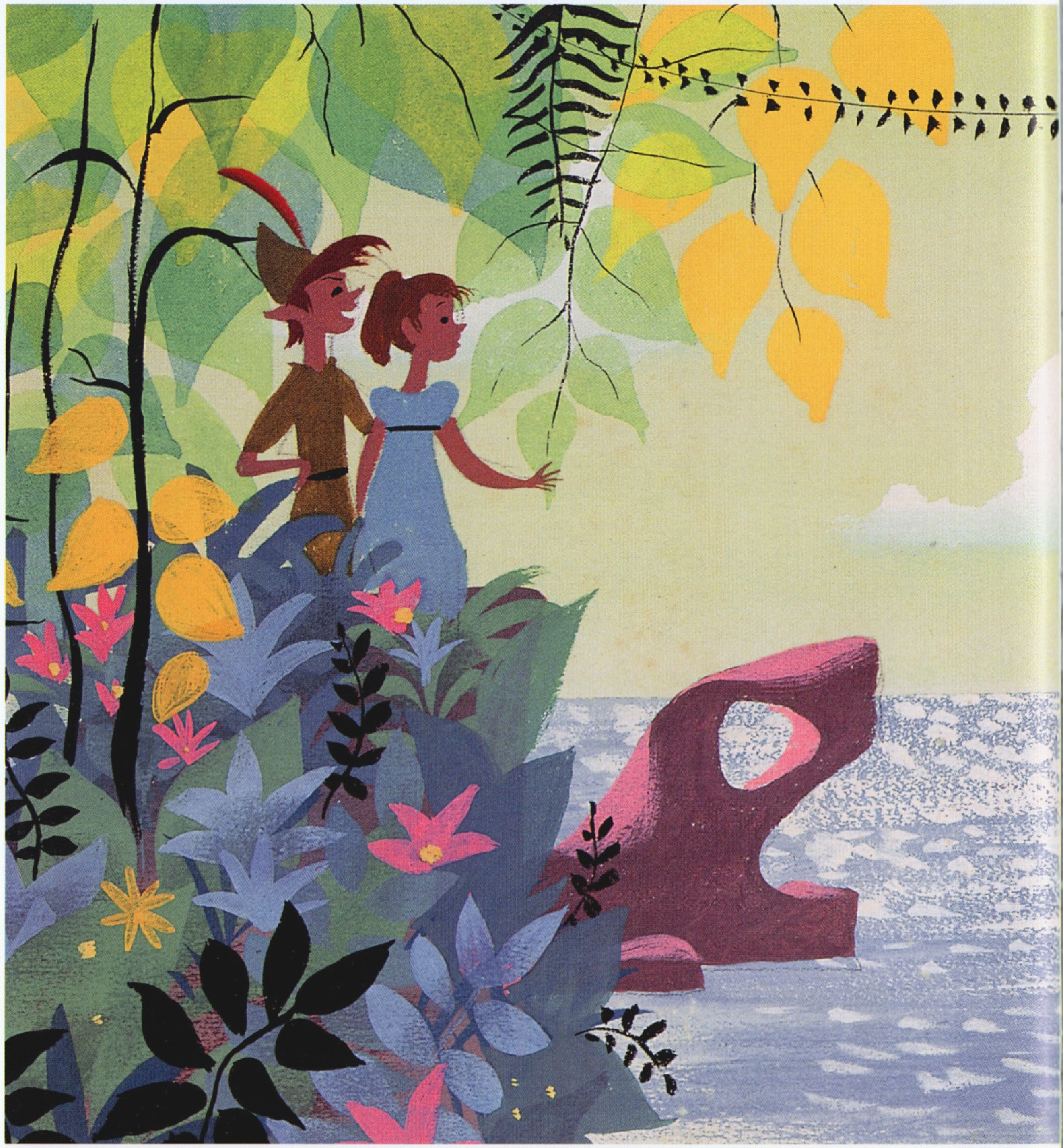
Mary Blair (1911–1978) is another significant artist of the era who provided color and styling suggestions for three of Disney's feature films in the 1950s—*Cinderella* (1950), *Alice in Wonderland* (1951), and *Peter Pan* (1953)—as well as art directing two shorts, *Susie the Little Blue Coupe* and *The Little House* (both 1952). The title "inspirational artist" is perhaps more appropriate to Blair than "designer," because the artists who created the final characters and backgrounds were given the choice of using as much or as little of her work as they desired, and they usually opted for the latter option.

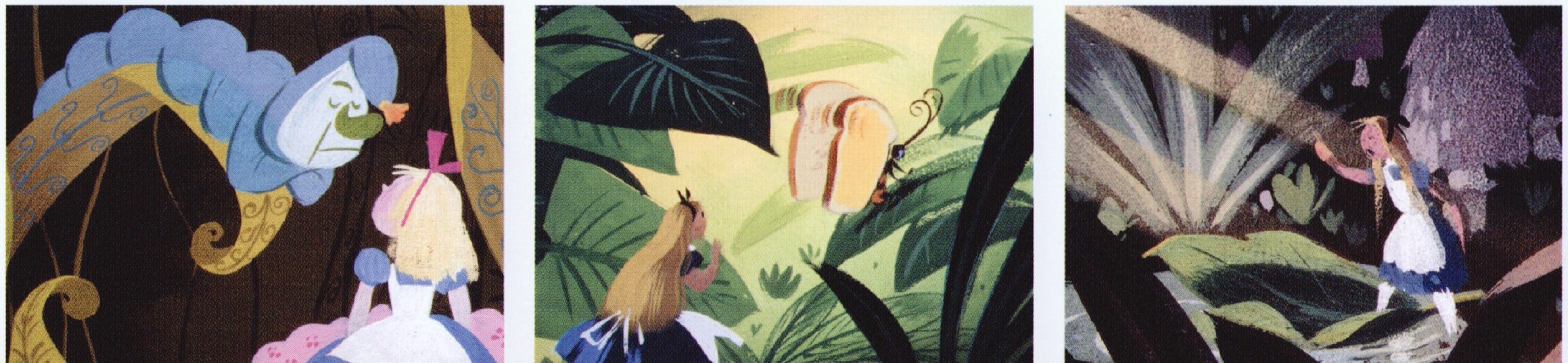
Her brilliant sense of color no doubt inspired many of the studio's productions, especially during the 1940s, with *The Three Caballeros* (1945) and the "Once Upon a Wintertime" sequence from *Melody Time* (1948), but her wholly modern sensibility was rarely captured in the final films. "[She] was an extraordinary artist who spent most of her life being misunderstood," animator Marc Davis explains.

> *All the men that were there [at Disney], their design was based on perspective. Mary did things on marvelous flat planes. Walt appreciated this and wanted to see this, but he, not being an artist himself, was never able to instruct the men on how to use this. . . . [I]t was tragic because she did things that were so marvelous and never got on the screen.*

Ironically, Blair's work is more appreciated in today's animation world than it was during the 1950s. Michael Giaimo offers a present-day perspective of what makes Blair's design work so valuable:

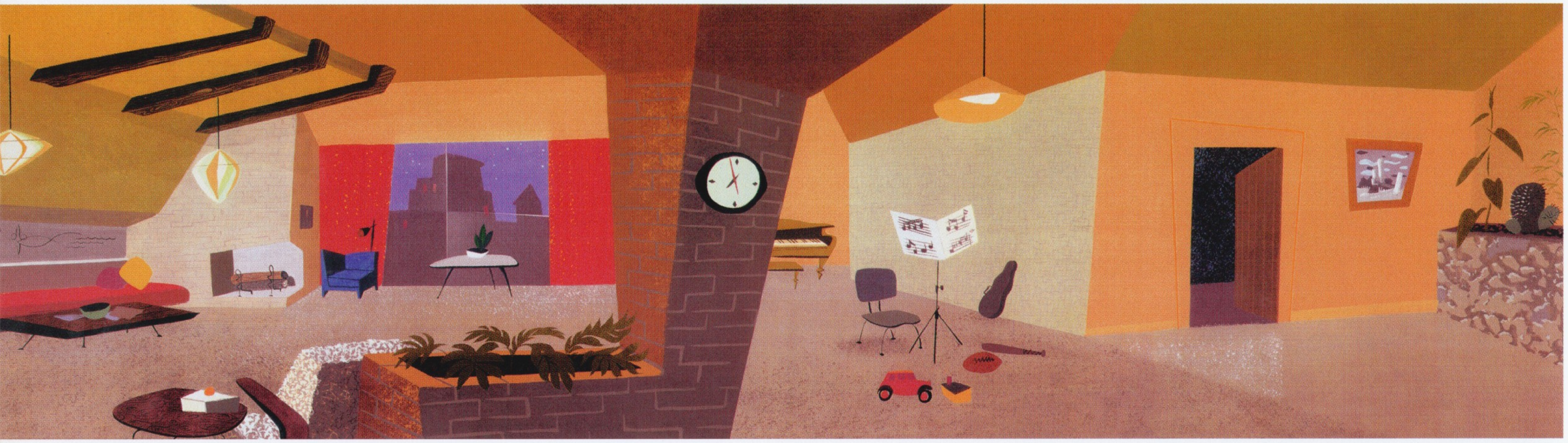
> *In her sensibility alone there is much to be gained, in that her work is never strained, but always fresh, genuine, sincere and incredibly appealing. In this age of irony and cynicism, her work offers a bastion of control and tempered restraint. Though much of it is hard to break down into hard and fast color rules, the one aspect that pulls through all of her work is a sense of strong values that translates into readability and clarity of concept. This is something I keep in mind every day as I set up a scene: Is the character reading? Do they pull away from the background? Have I gotten rid of confusing, extraneous detail so that the point of the scene comes through? You'll see this in all her concept paintings carried thru to the final scenes on film.*



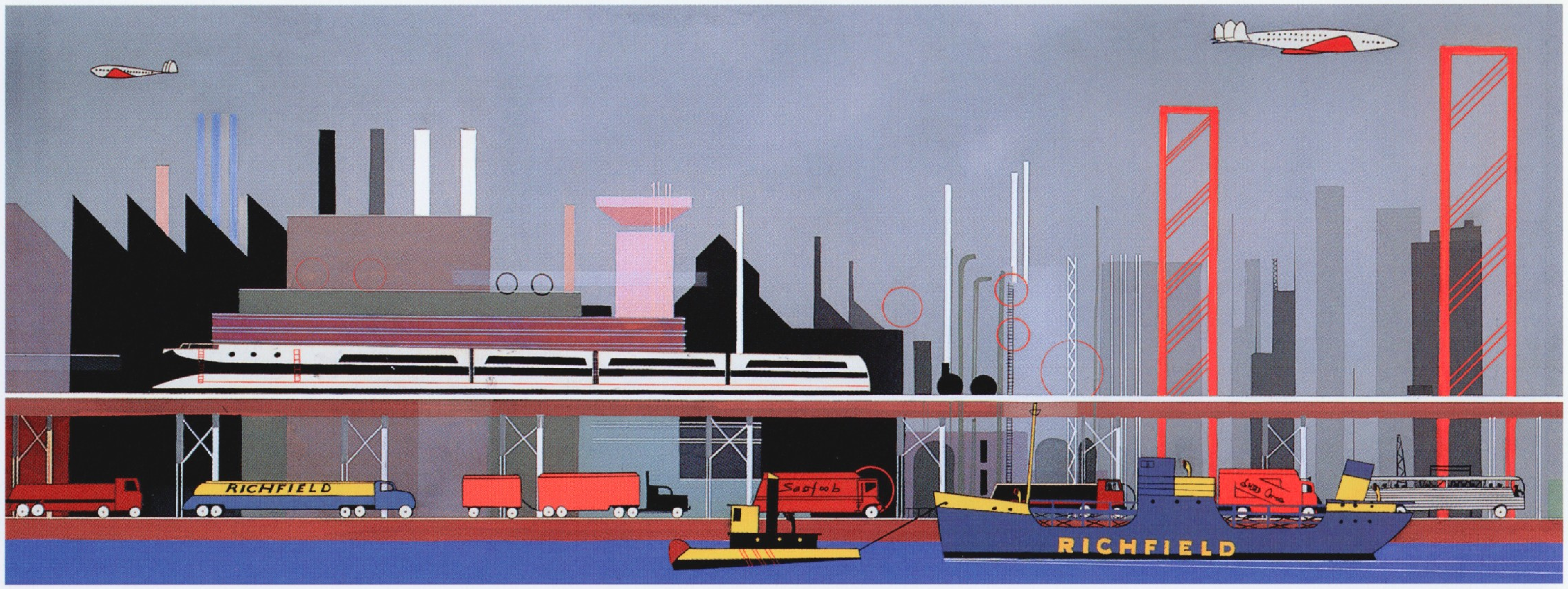


ALICE IN WONDERLAND (1951)
Directors: Clyde Geronimi, Wilfred Jackson, Hamilton Luske
Concept paintings by Mary Blair

***Peter Pan* (1953)**
Directors: Clyde Geronimi,
Wilfred Jackson, Hamilton Luske
Concept painting by Mary Blair



***A Cowboy Needs a Horse* (1956)**
Director: Bill Justice
Backgound painting by unknown
artist based on a layout drawing
by Xavier Atencio



***The World Beneath Us* (1955)**
Background painting by Eyvind
Earle for a Richfield Oil film that
screened at Disneyland

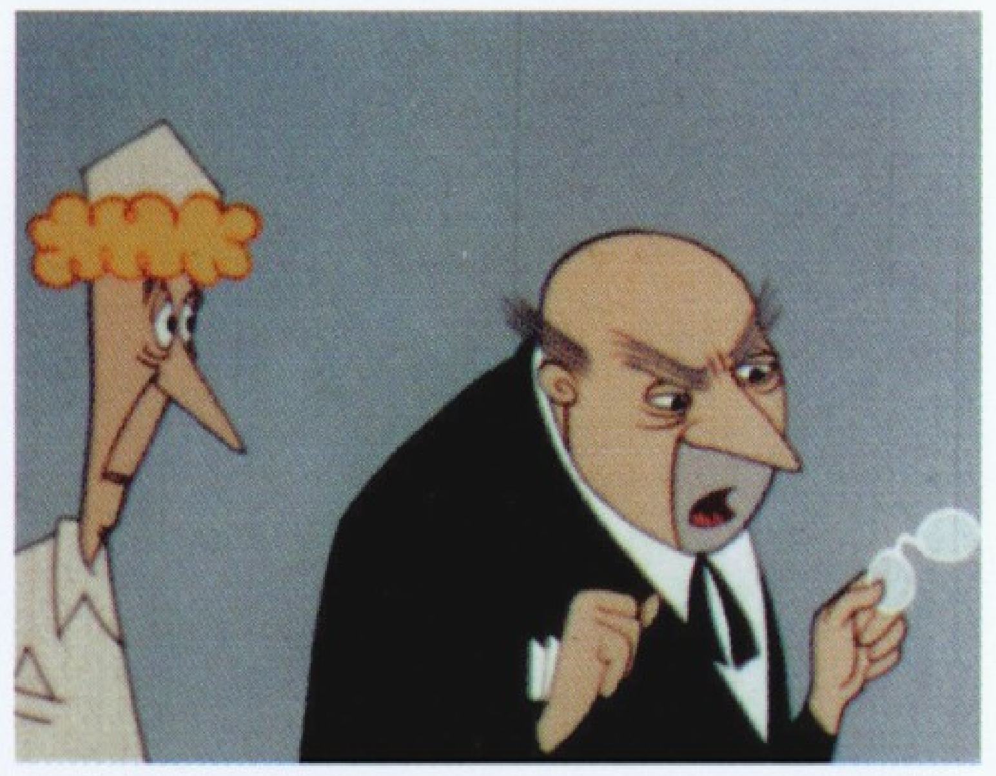
Opposite: ***Pigs Is Pigs* (1954)**
Director: Jack Kinney
Background painting by Eyvind
Earle based on a layout drawing
by Bruce Bushman

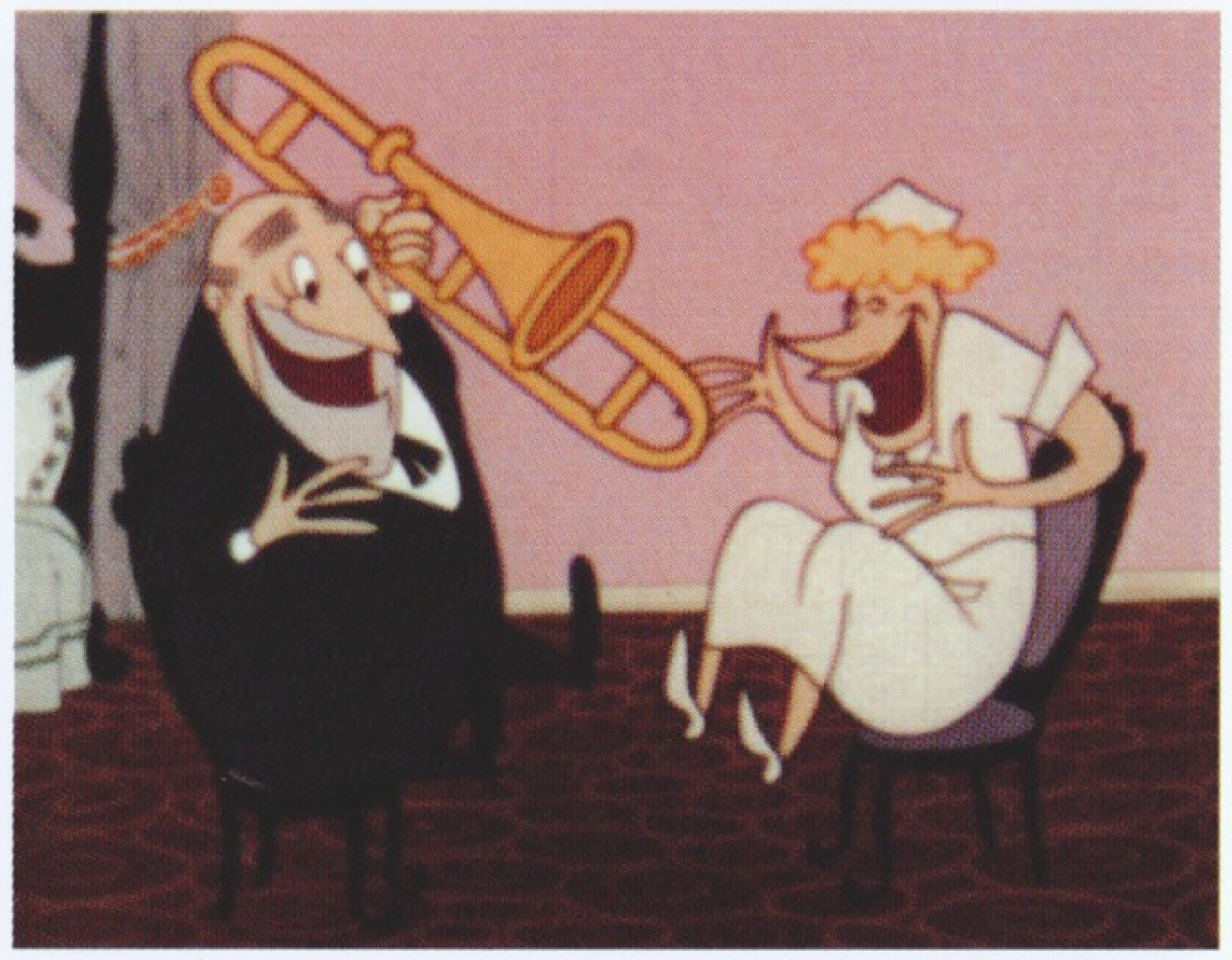
Eyvind Earle

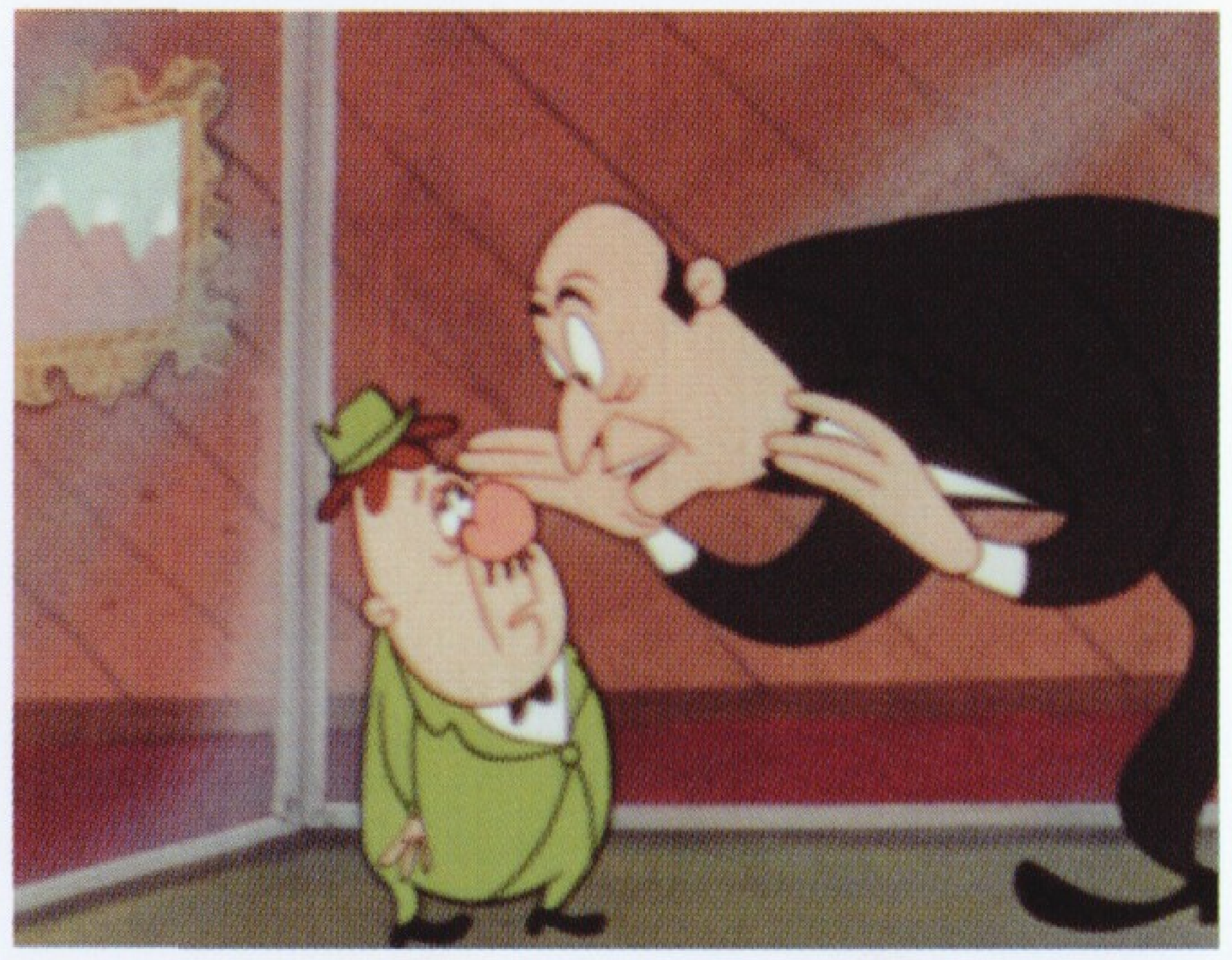
W

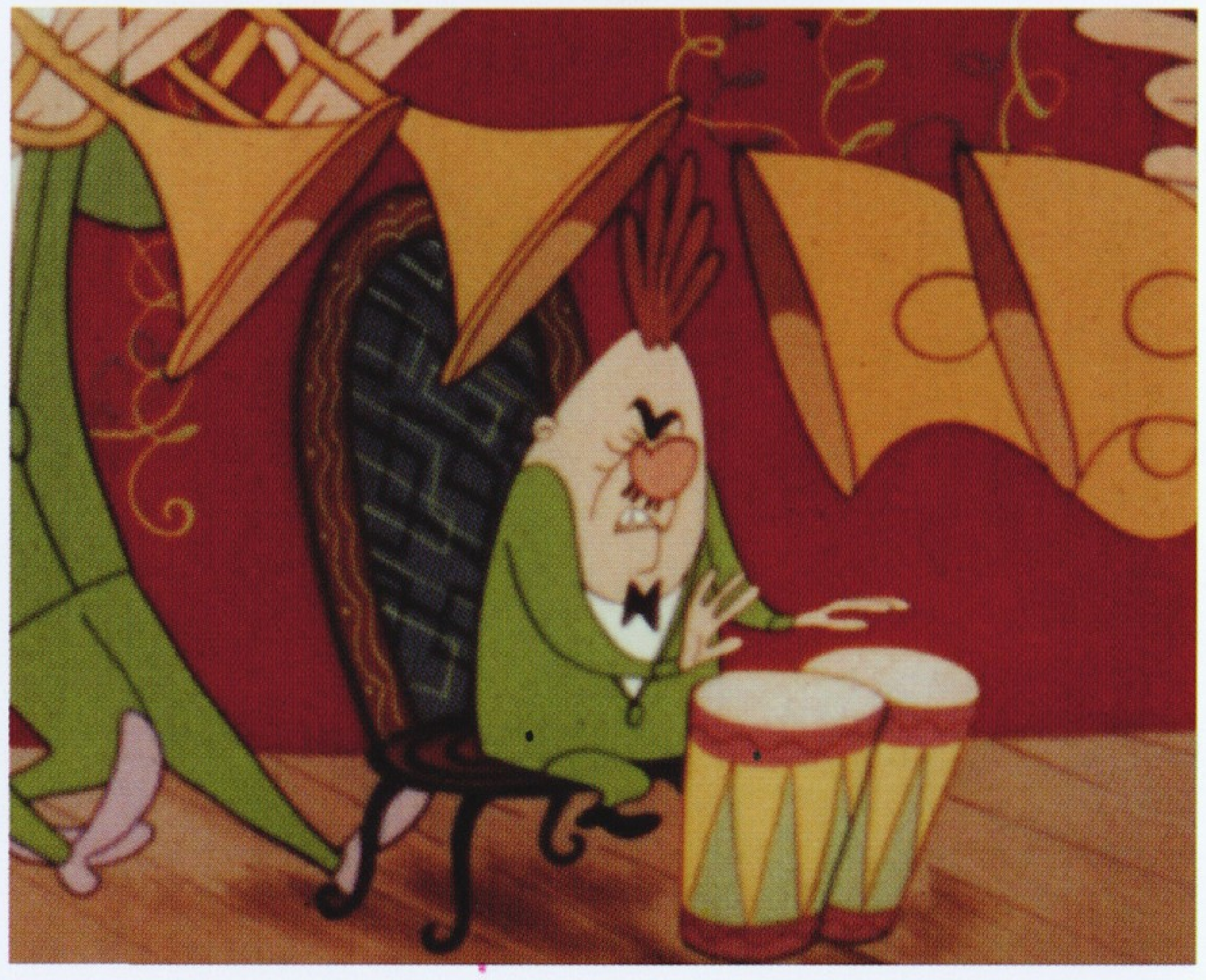
WALTER LANTZ PRODUCTIONS

Most studios, if not fully embracing the arsenal of contemporary ideas at their disposal, made at least a token effort to streamline the look of their cartoons during the 1950s. Not so with Walter Lantz Productions, the studio responsible for Woody Woodpecker. The studio continued pumping out cartoons using its hackneyed design formula and trite gag-driven cartoon structure, exerting nominal energy to keep up with the times. The studio managed a handful of relatively forward-looking shorts (four, to be exact), and those all came courtesy of Tex Avery, who worked briefly at the studio in 1954 after leaving MGM. The films, like *Crazy Mixed-Up Pup* and *S-H-H-H* (both 1955), lack the elegant styling of Avery's MGM films but still display a cohesive contemporary outlook with his spare sense of design and sharp animation timing. After Avery's departure, the other Lantz directors copied the Avery formula for the remainder of the decade. Sadly, their inept interpretation of the Avery style only resulted in cruder character designs and more limited and inexpressive animation.



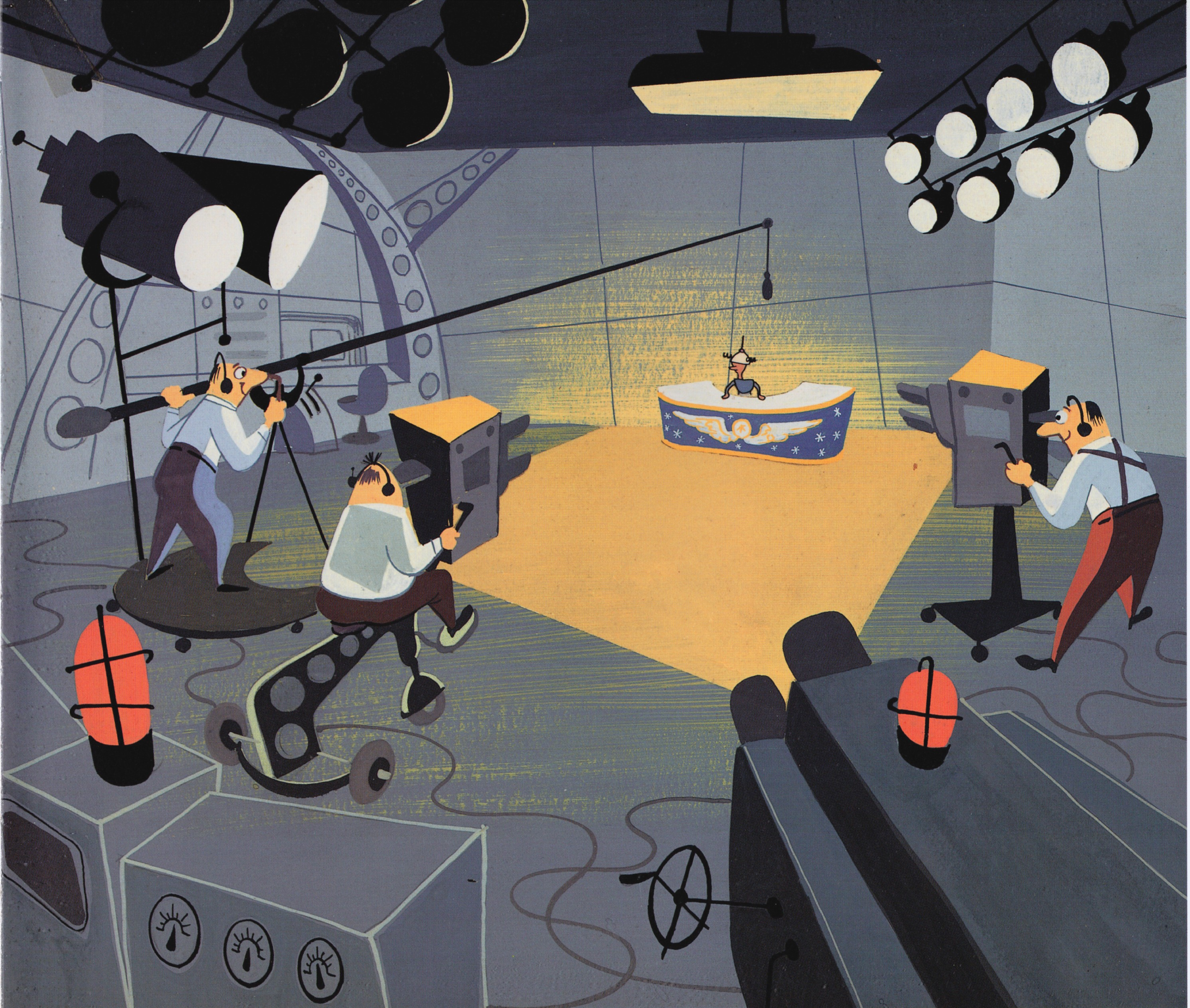






***S-H-H-H* (1955)**
Director: Tex Avery
Film stills

Opposite: ***Woodpecker from Mars* (1956)**
Director: Paul J. Smith
Background painting by
unknown artist



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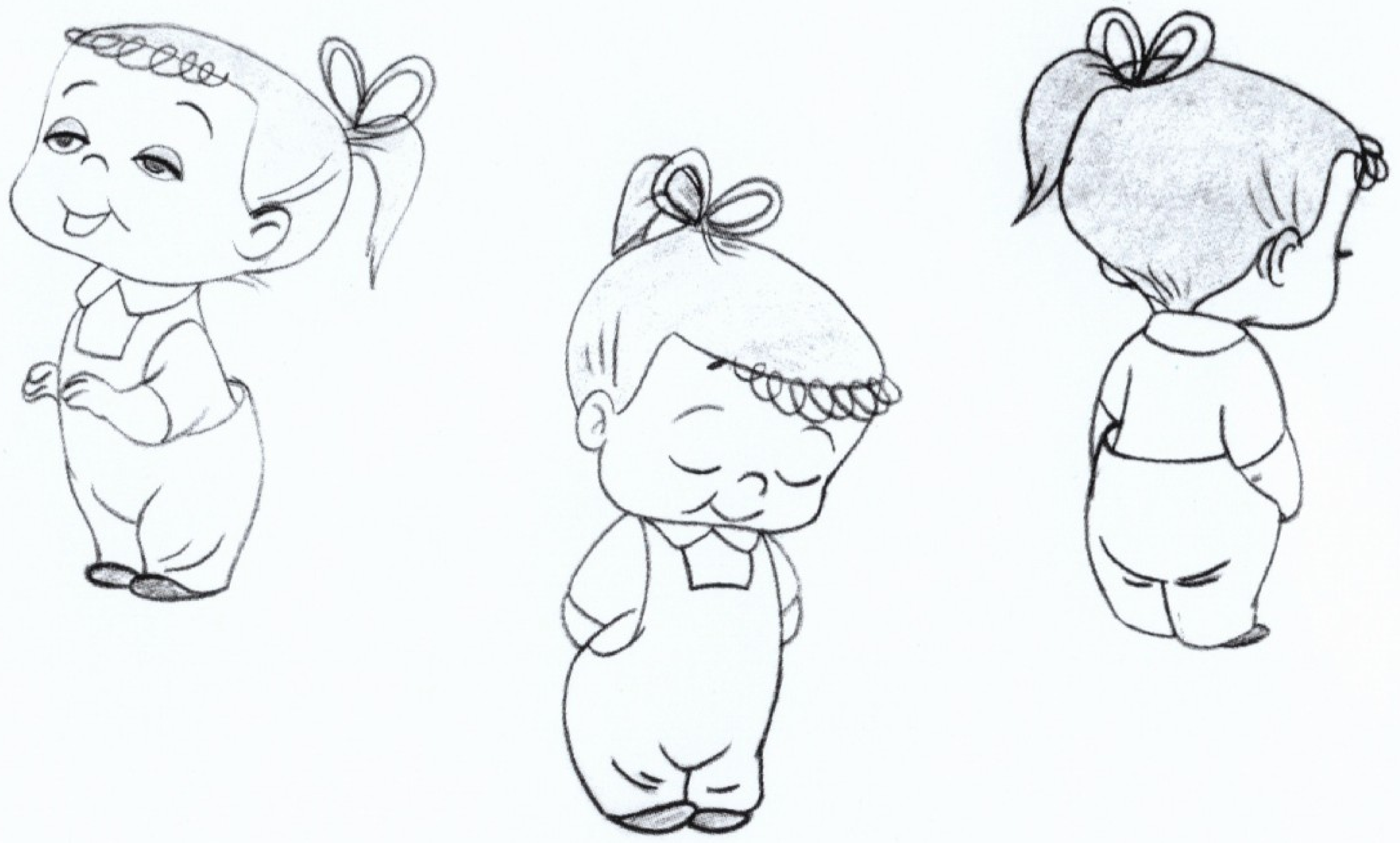
WARNER BROS.



Above: ***A Kiddie's Kitty* (1955)**
Director: Friz Freleng
Model sheet drawings
by Hawley Pratt

The Warner Bros. shorts, with their brash roughhouse humor, are not the first place one expects to find the pristine shapes and forms of 1950s animation design, but the studio wasn't immune to the sweeping graphic developments within the animation industry. In fact, one of the decade's most well-known designers, Maurice Noble, worked almost exclusively at Warner Bros. The three main directors at Warner Bros. during the 1950s—Friz Freleng, Bob McKimson, and Chuck Jones—each took his own approach to design.

Friz Freleng (1906–1995) was the oldest director at the studio. His animation career, which began in Kansas City, stretched back to 1923. Freleng was a master of old-school gag-driven cartoons: chases, mallets, and cornball vaudeville routines were his specialty; exploring the difference between Synthetic and Analytical Cubism was not. He wisely understood that imposing a veneer of modernity on films that didn't call for it would look contrived. Freleng explained: "At Warner Bros. we started to do contemporary backgrounds and we were influenced by some of [UPA's] movements and their actions. Their style worked—for *their* characters. But it didn't always work for ours. We had long ago set our style and the personalities of our characters. When we tried to do what UPA did we started to lose those personalities."

Freleng, however, did allow his right-hand man, Hawley Pratt (1911–1999), to streamline the look of his films. Pratt, who served as Freleng's layout artist throughout the entire decade, designed both characters and background layouts, helping to create a unified look to the films. Pratt had studied at the Art Students League and Pratt Institute (no relation) in New York City before finding employment at Disney in 1939. Unlike some lesser designers of the period who simply sharpened corners on characters in the belief that they were creating a "modern look," Pratt's designs are much more subtle and appropriate to Freleng's humor. He designed characters with more clearly delineated shapes, as in his designs of the cat and mouse in *Pizzicato Pussycat* or the character of Slowpoke Rodriguez, but the characters never betrayed the rounded traditional form of the Warner Bros. characters.

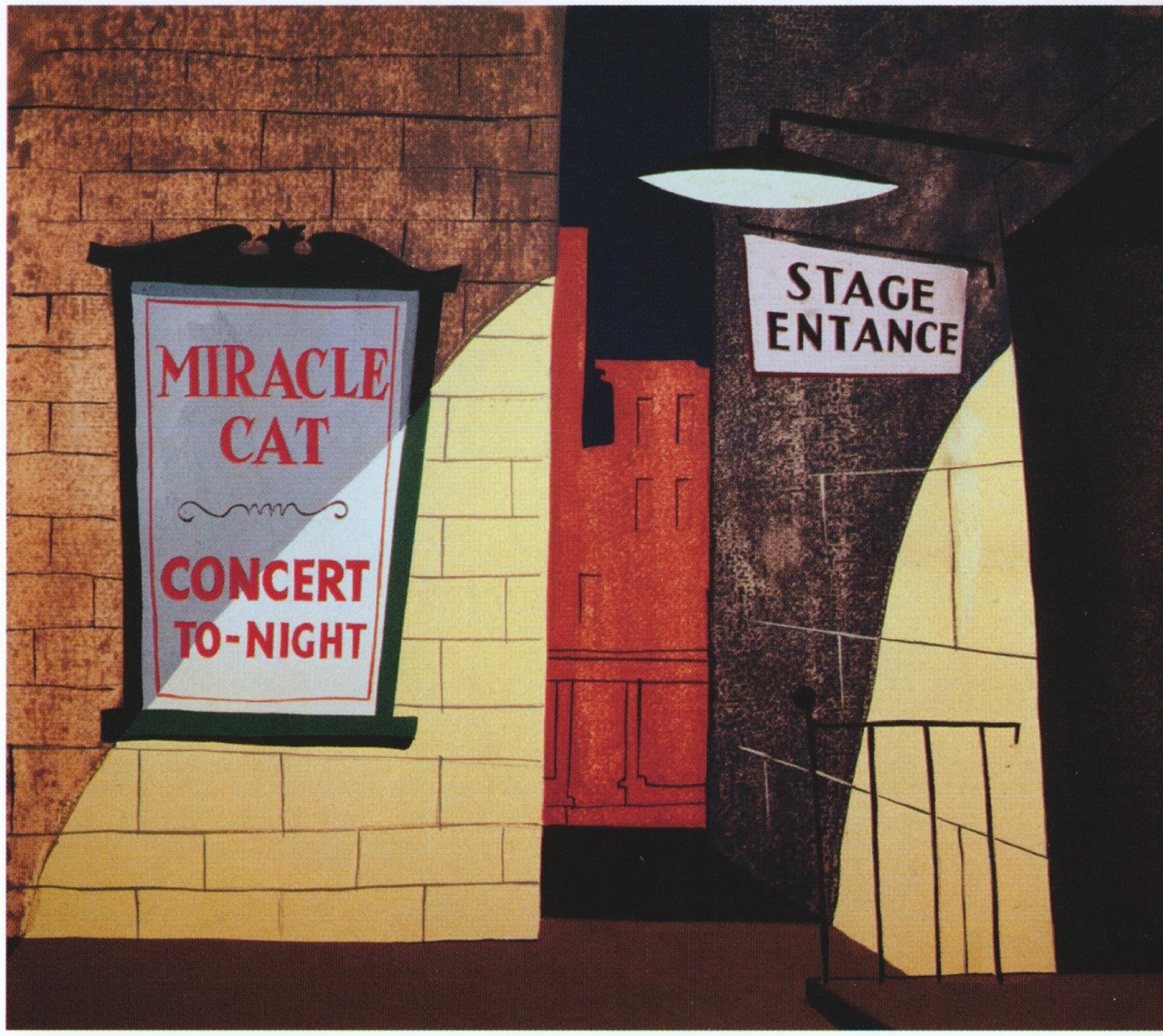
His backgrounds also expressed a modern sensibility with more thoughtfully composed setups and a subtle exaggeration of form. Pratt's pencil background layouts were painted by different artists during the 1950s, including Irv Wyner, Boris Gorelick, and Tom O'Loughlin. They all painted with bolder color combinations and less rendering than Freleng's earlier shorts, helping to enhance the impression of modernity. Gorelick's backgrounds in particular were quite handsome. Gorelick (1912–1984) had a fine art background, having studied at the National Academy of Design, the Art Students League, and Columbia University. He had been heavily involved with the WPA during the Depression and was one of the founders of the Artist's Union before turning to animation in the mid-1940s.

Bob McKimson (1910–1977) was in many respects similar to Freleng in his general ambivalence toward modern design, but he lacked a Hawley Pratt who could tweak the look of his characters and backgrounds. The most notable period of design in McKimson's films are his shorts released in 1953 and 1954, when Bob Givens served as his background layout artist. Givens had started his career at Disney in 1937. He was a versatile talent who had worked as a storyman, character designer, and layout artist, including a stint at UPA between 1948 and 1950, where he designed character model sheets for early Mr. Magoo shorts like *Spellbound Hound* (1950) and *Bungled Bungalow* (1950). His work brought a modern edge to McKimson's films, though McKimson could have probably cared less. Pratt recalled being influenced by the work of Givens throughout the 1950s: "He had a contemporary approach that was strange to us. . . . It was interesting to me. I liked it. Not that I could do it, but I borrowed."

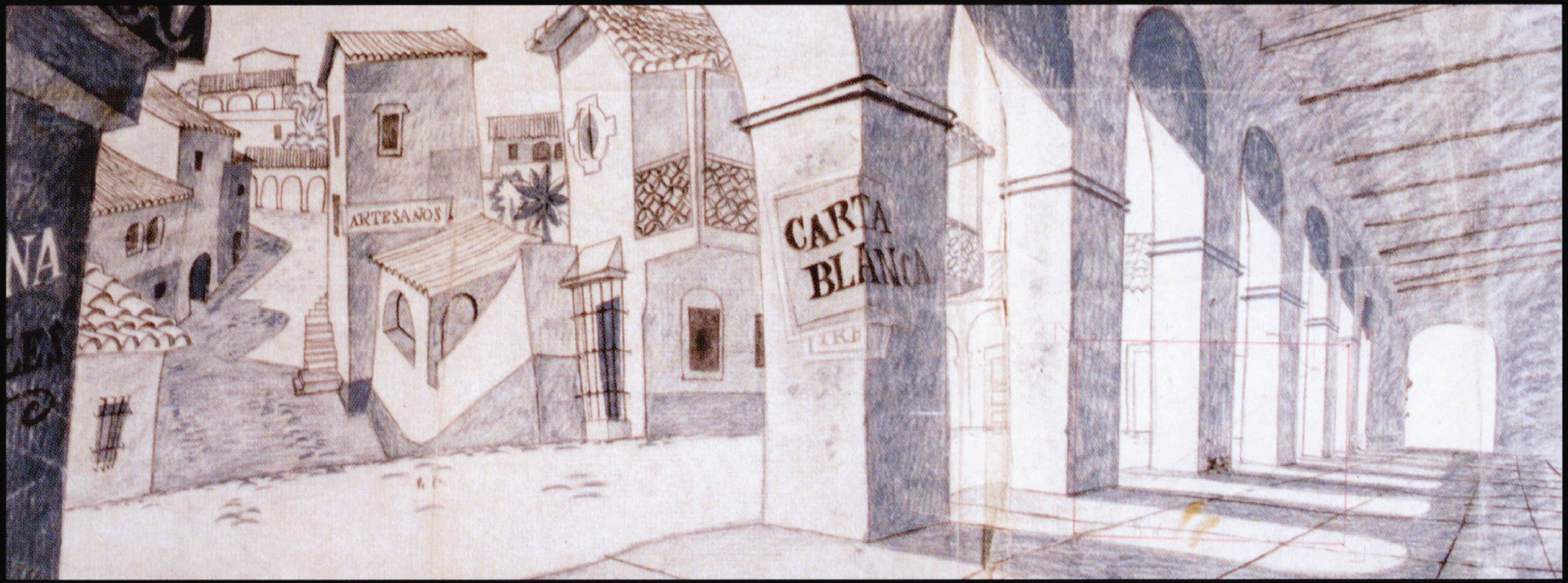
The most design conscious of the Warner Bros. directors was Chuck Jones (1912–2002), whose experiments with modern design dated back to the groundbreaking shorts he directed in the early 1940s when John McGrew was his layout artist. Jones used a variety of layout artists throughout the 1950s, including Bob Givens (*Lumberjack Rabbit* and *Past Perfumance*—both 1955), Ernie Nordli (*Broomstick Bunny* and *Rocket-Bye Baby*—both 1956), and, most notably, Maurice Noble.

Born in Spooner, Minnesota, Maurice Noble (1910–2001) was easily the most prolific and dedicated practitioner of the modern style at Warner Bros. He attended Chouinard Art Institute on a working scholarship in the early 1930s, but the Depression forced him to enter the workforce full time to support his family. He was working as a display and window designer at Robinson's Department Store in downtown Los Angeles when his displays attracted the attention of a Disney recruiter. He was hired to work at the studio as a background painter, where he contributed to *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* and the "Rite of Spring" sequence in *Fantasia* as well as serving as color coordinator on *Dumbo*. His most notable assignment at Disney was the two years he spent producing conceptual art for *Bambi*.

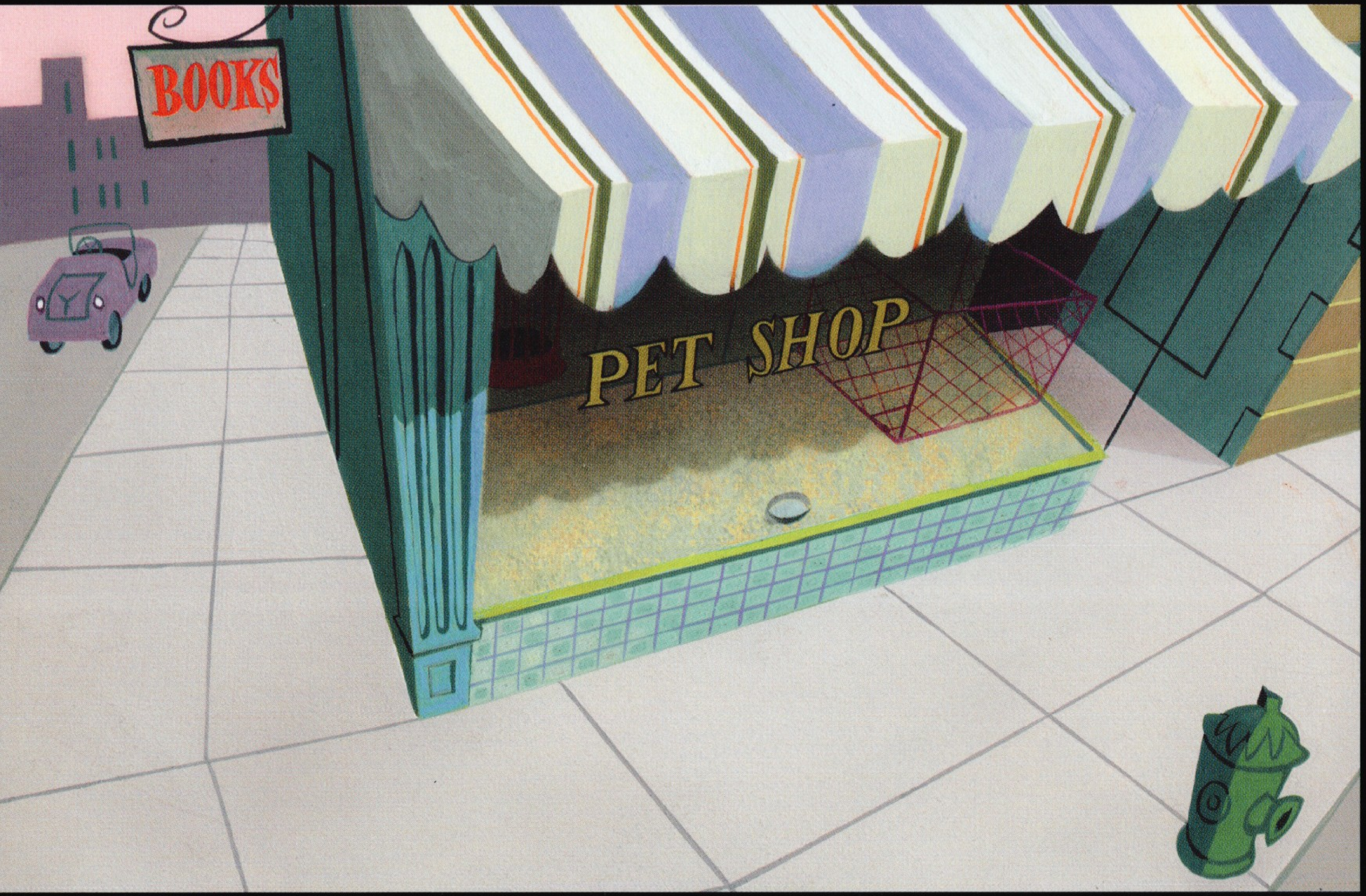
Ultimately, they used few of his styling suggestions, opting instead to go with Tyrus Wong's sensitive impressionistic watercolor style. "My view on the story of *Bambi* was more on the grand scale," Noble recalls, "and Tyrus's rendering and type of background seemed to lend itself to the intimate approach." Noble left Disney during the strike in 1941 and soon thereafter enlisted in the Army Signal Corps in a unit that



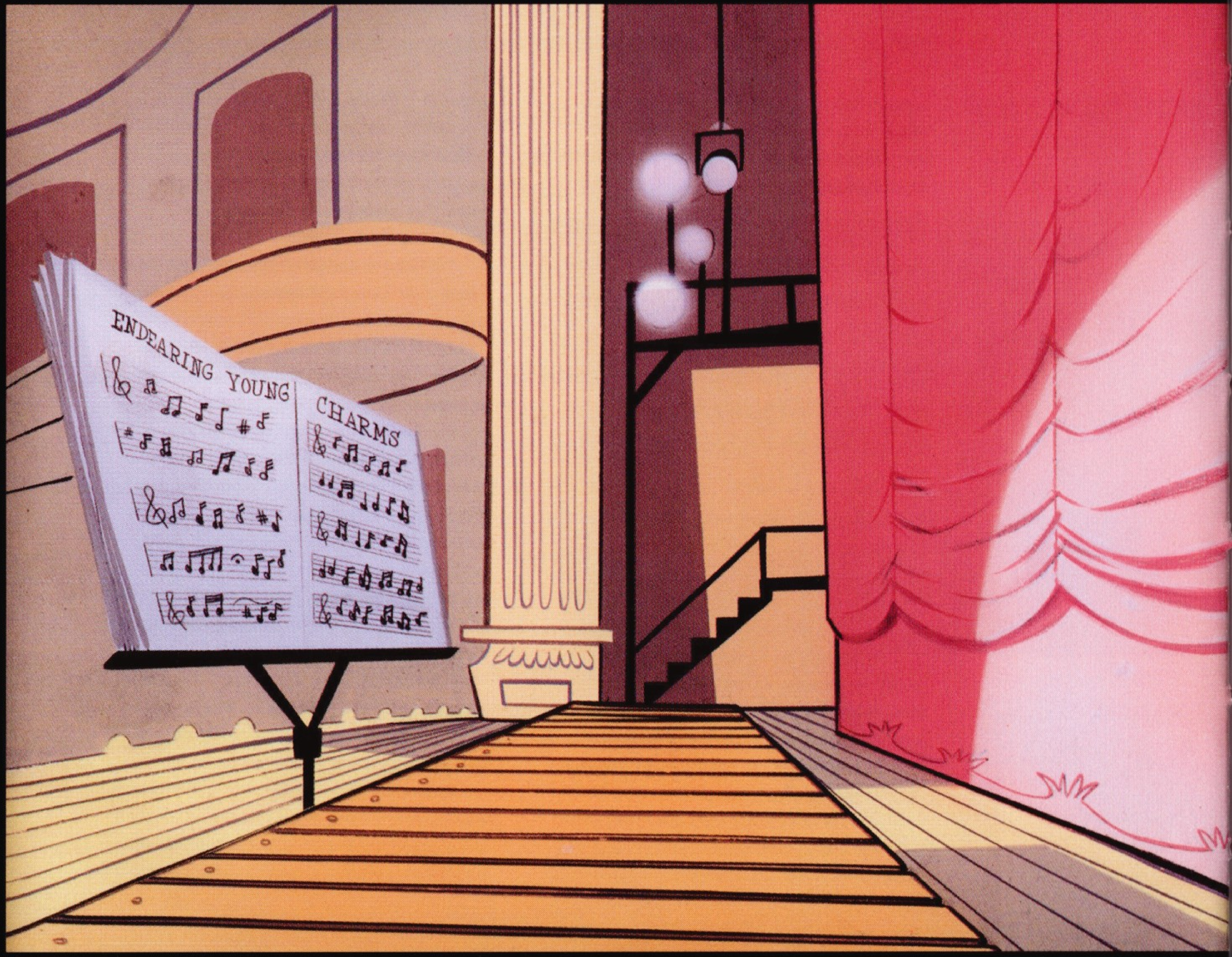
***Pizzicato Pussycat* (1955)**
Director: Friz Freleng
Background painting by
Richard H. Thomas based on a
layout drawing by Hawley Pratt


NA
ARTESANOS
CARTA BLANCA

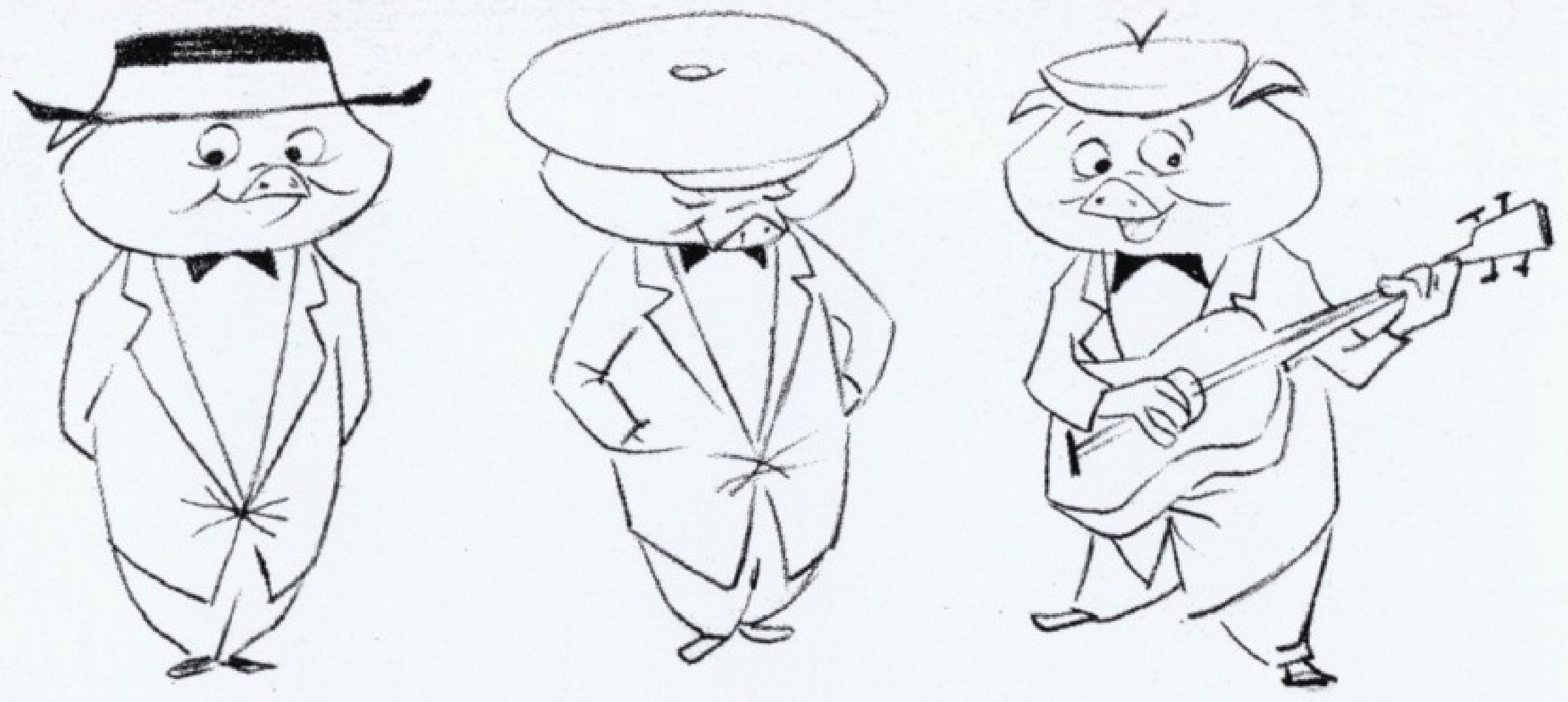
***Gonzales' Tamales* (1957)**
Director: Friz Freleng
Layout drawing by Hawley Pratt


BOOKS
PET SHOP

***A Waggily Tale* (1958)**
Director: Friz Freleng
Background painting by
Boris Gorelick based on
a layout by Hawley Pratt


ENDEARING YOUNG CHARMS

***Show Biz Bugs* (1957)**
Director: Friz Freleng
Background painting by
Boris Gorelick based on
a layout by Hawley Pratt



was headed by Ted "Dr. Seuss" Geisel and included other Modernists like Phil Eastman and Gene Fleury. Noble designed a number of the Private Snafu shorts, which were animated by Warner Bros. directors like Jones and Freleng. Noble also worked briefly at Warner Bros. in the early and mid-1940s for both Freleng and Jones, but his contributions to the cartoons of the period were minimal. He moved to Saint Louis in 1946, where he worked on filmstrips for the Lutheran Church. He was recruited to become the Jones unit layout artist at Warner Bros. in 1950.

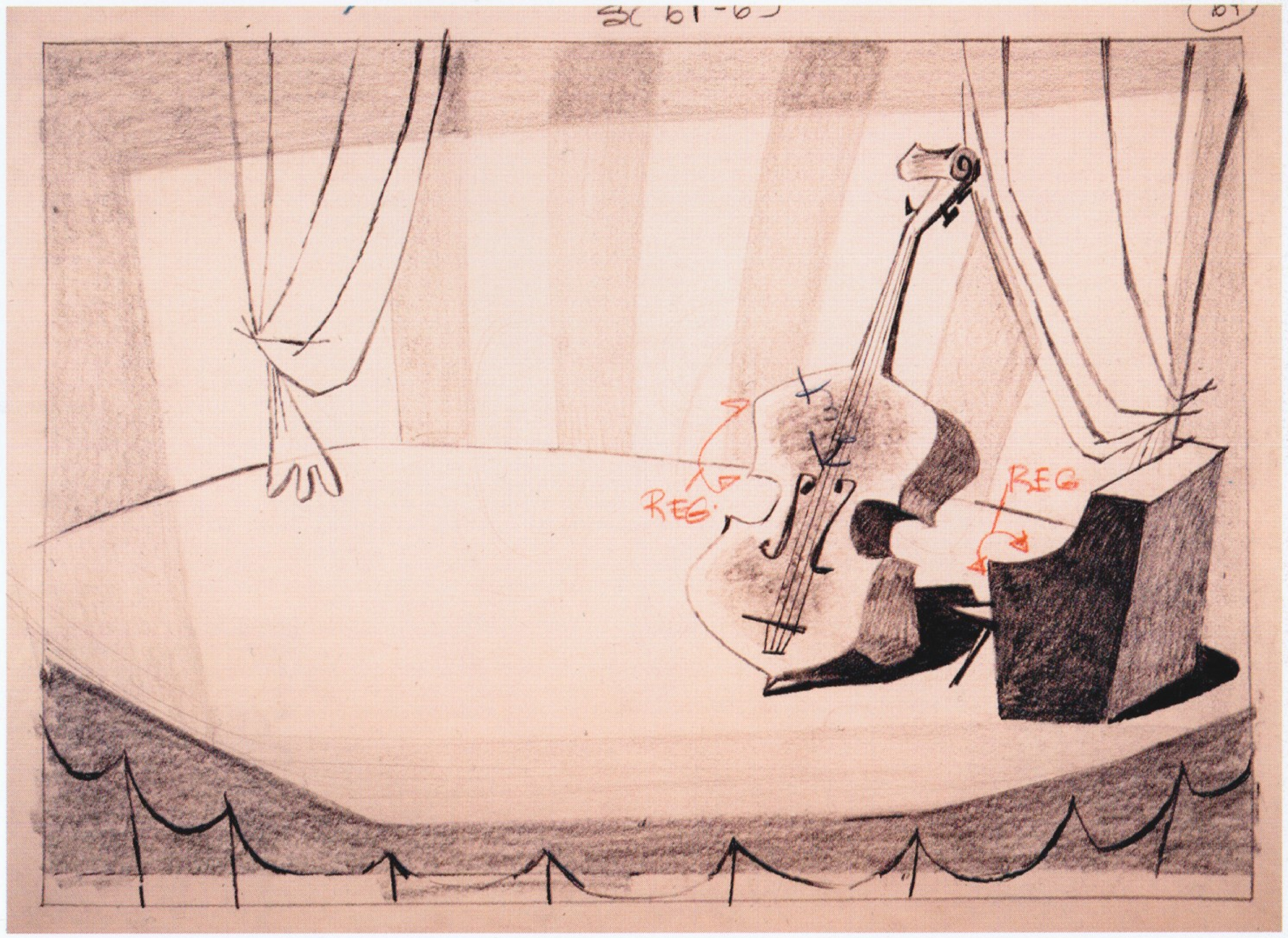
Noble practiced a type of accessible modernism that resonated with mainstream audiences. In this way, his work was similar to the character designs of Ed Benedict—contemporary, but never sacrificing cartooniness to make a graphic statement. Noble never expressed any great kinship with modern art movements. In fact, he once told an interviewer that he felt annoyed when people asked him about his influences. "My training background and basic love was the fine arts," Noble explained. "The composition and movement of my designs followed the rules of the ages—proportion, space relationships, drawing and taste. Film presents a new dimension to composition—moving length, changing moods, speed and shifting areas of color and design. I do believe it is an original art expression and I always treated it as such." He, however, did have a great appreciation for folk art and crafts, especially the works of Chinese and Mexican craftsmen, who he felt used colors and shapes freely and without scrupulous beliefs.

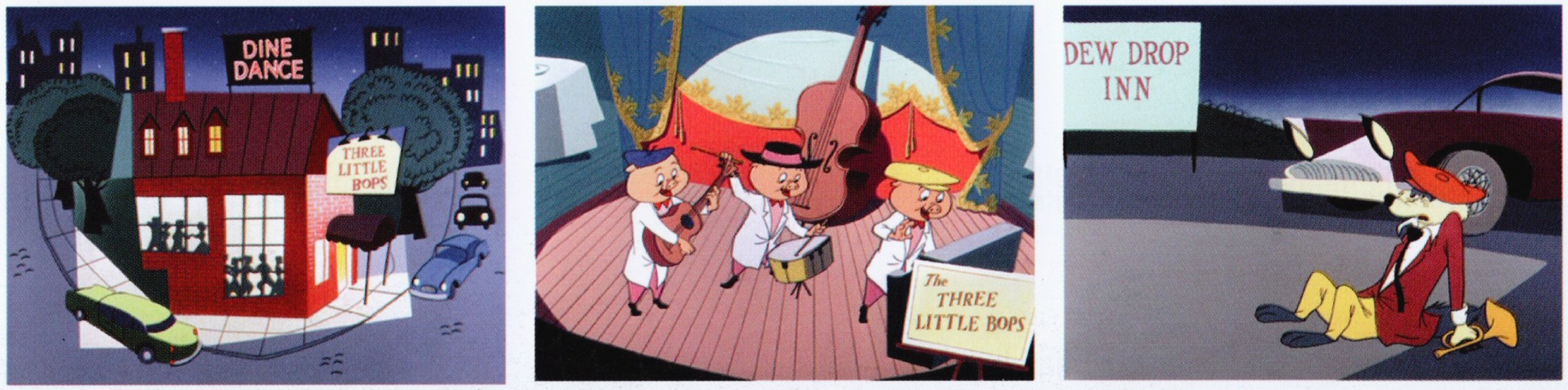
One of the guiding philosophies of Noble's design was to have fun with his designs. "In essence, all design for animation should have a certain humor to it. It must, in its shapes and color, contribute to the spirit of the cartoon," Noble said. Tod Polson, a designer who trained under Noble in the 1990s, recalls that learning to make layouts look fun was one of the most important lessons he learned from Maurice:

> *The key to good design is bringing in elements that are unique to a place, story or character, something that makes a scene special and memorable. Allowing the audience to laugh just from the backgrounds or layout, giving details about the character or story that aren't in the dialogue. It may sound easy but making things look "fun" is one of the most difficult things you can try to do.*

Designer Michael Giaimo puts it nicely when he says that Noble's work exudes a "visual giddiness." A perfect example of Noble's playful design work can be found in the Pepe Le Pew shorts. Noble admits:

> *I'm quite sure that a lot of the French furniture I've thrown in some of the Pepe Le Pews would never stand on their over-exaggerated curved legs,*





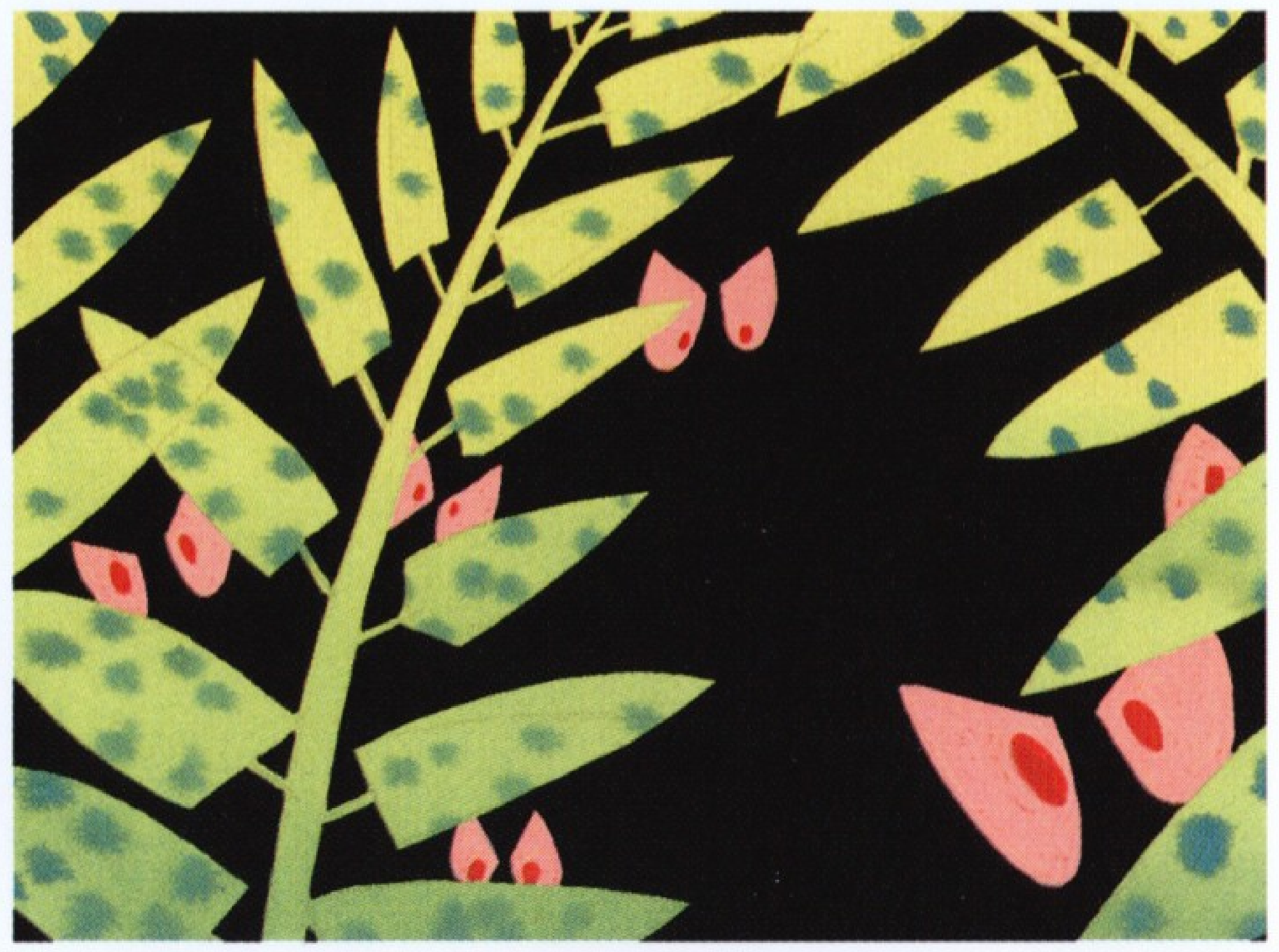
***Three Little Bops* (1957)**
Director: Friz Freleng
Left: Film stills
Top: Model sheet drawings by Gerry Chiniquy
Above right: Layout drawing by Hawley Pratt

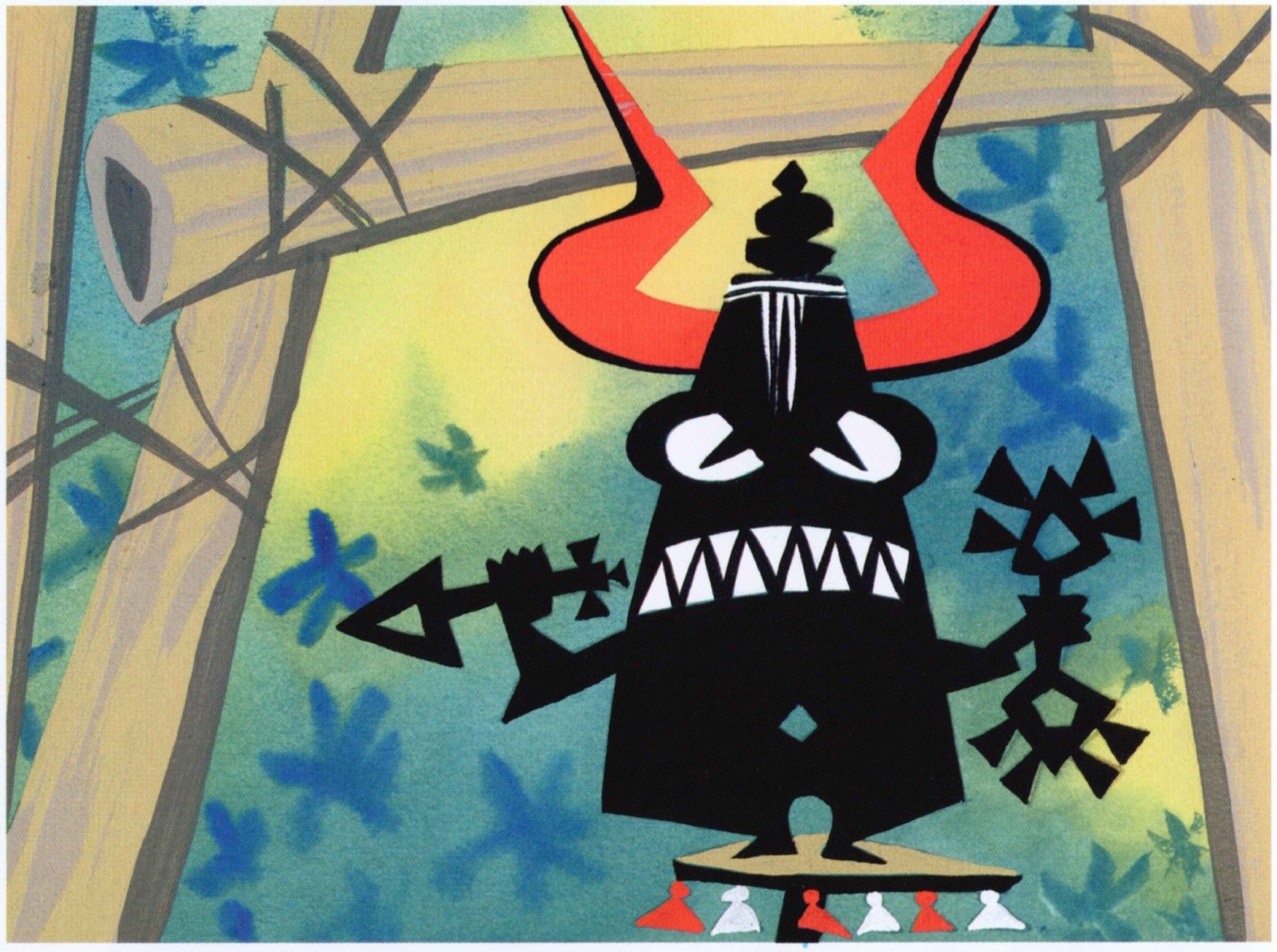
> *but the overall appearance when the eye sees it quickly is: Here is an overdone rococo French interior, of big swerving backs and so forth.*

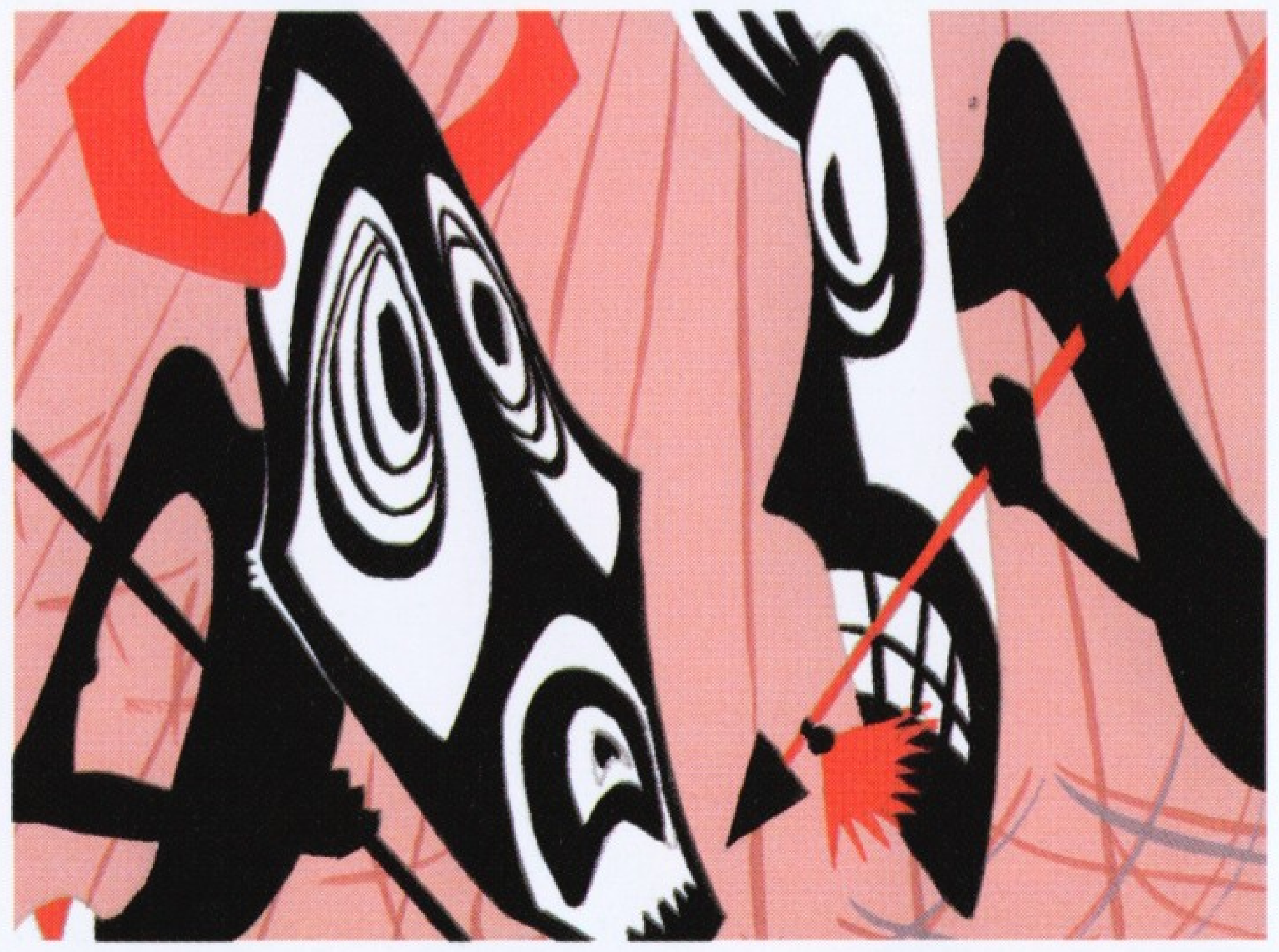
Noble's spirited sense of design manifests itself in all aspects of his work. He makes frequent use of exaggerated "forced" perspectives and large silhouette shapes. He renders rocks and tree trunks with abstract patterned lines. Pinks and purples are used in his backgrounds more frequently than any other color stylist of the time. In *Robin Hood Daffy* (1958) and the Ralph Wolf & Sam Sheepdog shorts, instead of painting leaves, Noble used stamps cut out in the shapes of leaves and plants. Though Noble didn't actually paint the finished backgrounds—Philip De Guard did—Noble often provided comprehensive color roughs that dictated not only the colors but also the painting style.

The style that Noble employed on the Chuck Jones shorts is regarded with a certain sense of derision by other designers of the era. Disney and UPA artists frequently complained to me during interviews for this book that Noble's work was too self-consciously styled, a little too sugary and sweet for its own good. When asked about Noble's work, UPA background painter Jules Engel bluntly proclaimed, "I wouldn't have allowed him to work at UPA. . . . No way." Engel went on to dismiss Noble's backgrounds for "never really conceiving it, never really concluding, never coming from the gut, never really understanding," but what he perceives to be hollow artistry is perhaps a fundamentally different approach from the type of background design and painting that Engel practiced at UPA. Noble was fully aware that his backgrounds didn't look like UPA's, and considering his reservations about the UPA style, he wouldn't have wanted it any other way:

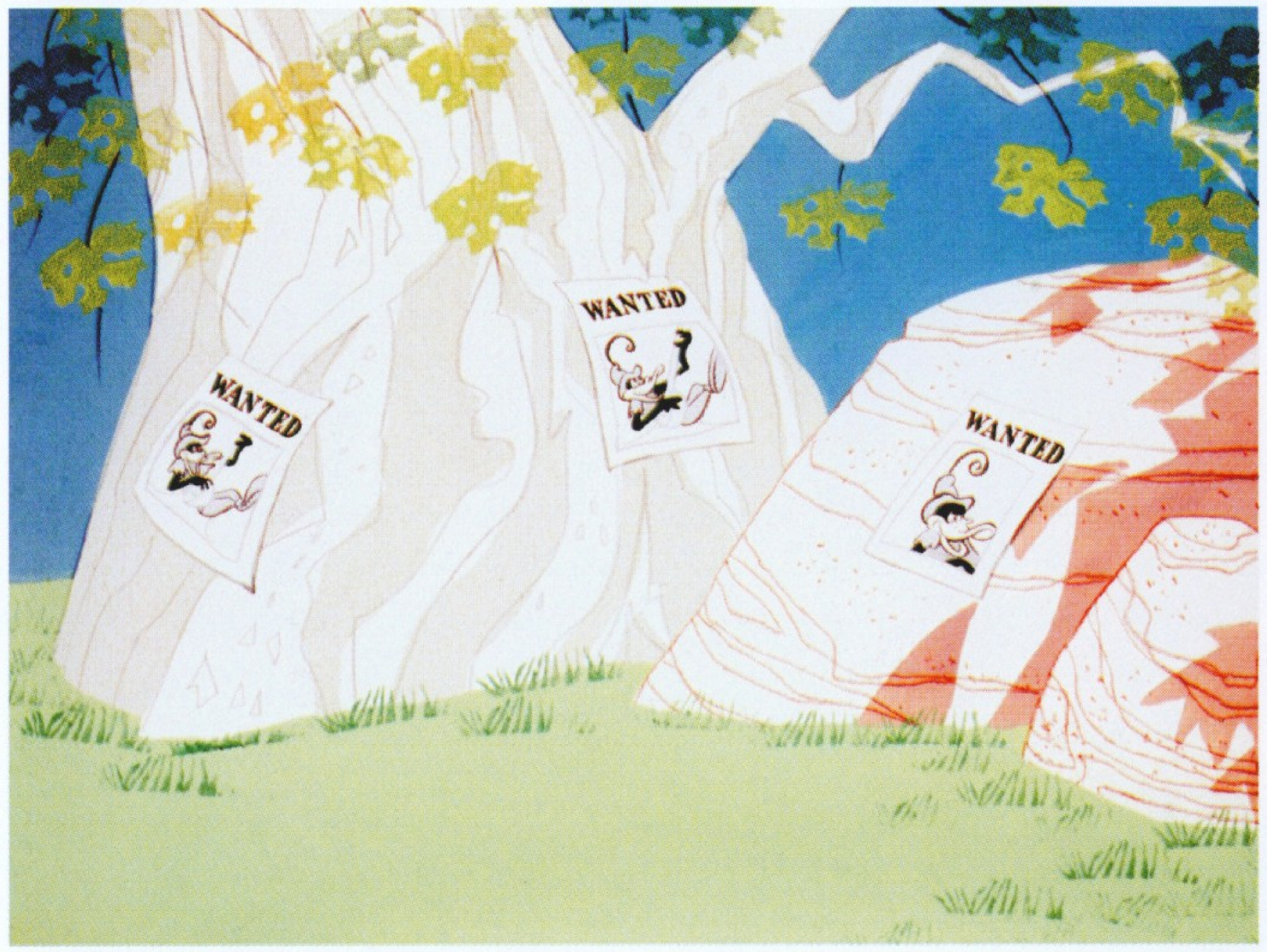
> *I don't believe that any cartoon is successful when you force a design onto it. I think that this was one of the problems with UPA: they overdesigned. . . . I think UPA outsmarted itself in overdesigning and being kind of smart-assed. . . . I think I can honestly say that I've never designed anything that I didn't think was going to communicate to the audience. After all, you have to have an audience.*

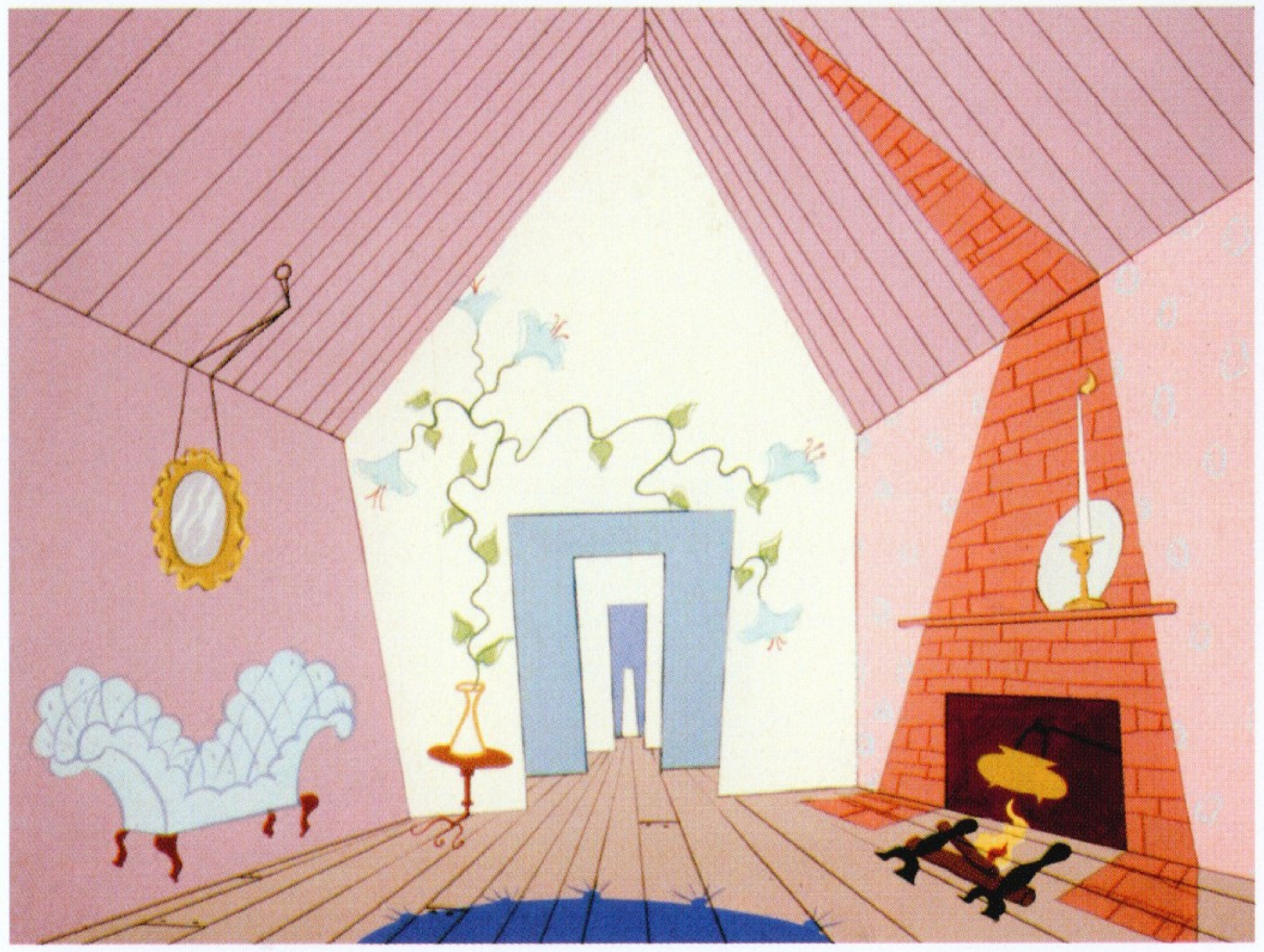






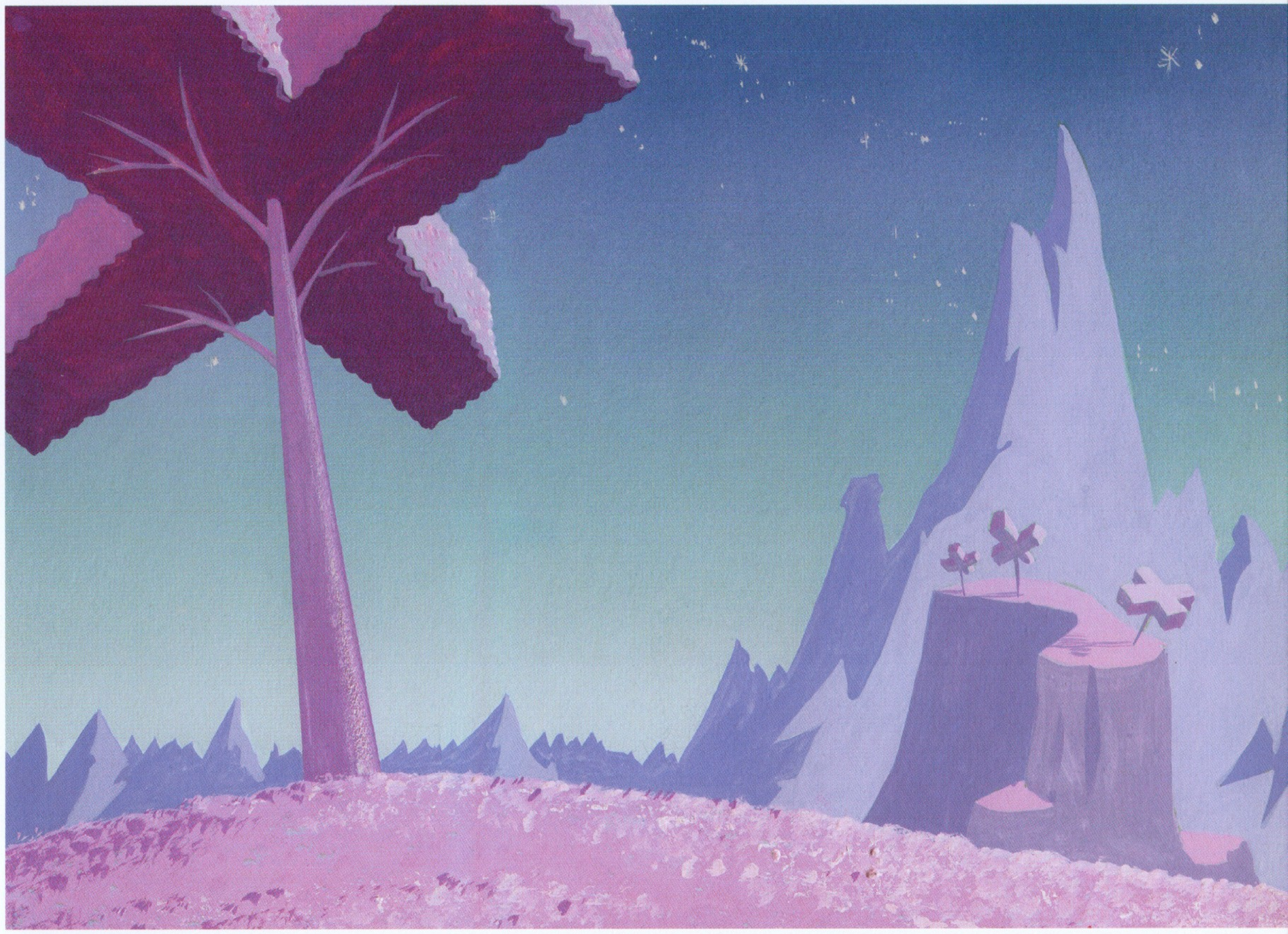
***Boyhood Daze* (1957)**
Director: Chuck Jones
Concept paintings
by Maurice Noble





Top: ***Robin Hood Daffy* (1958)**
Director: Chuck Jones
Background painting by Phil De Guard
based on a layout by Maurice Noble

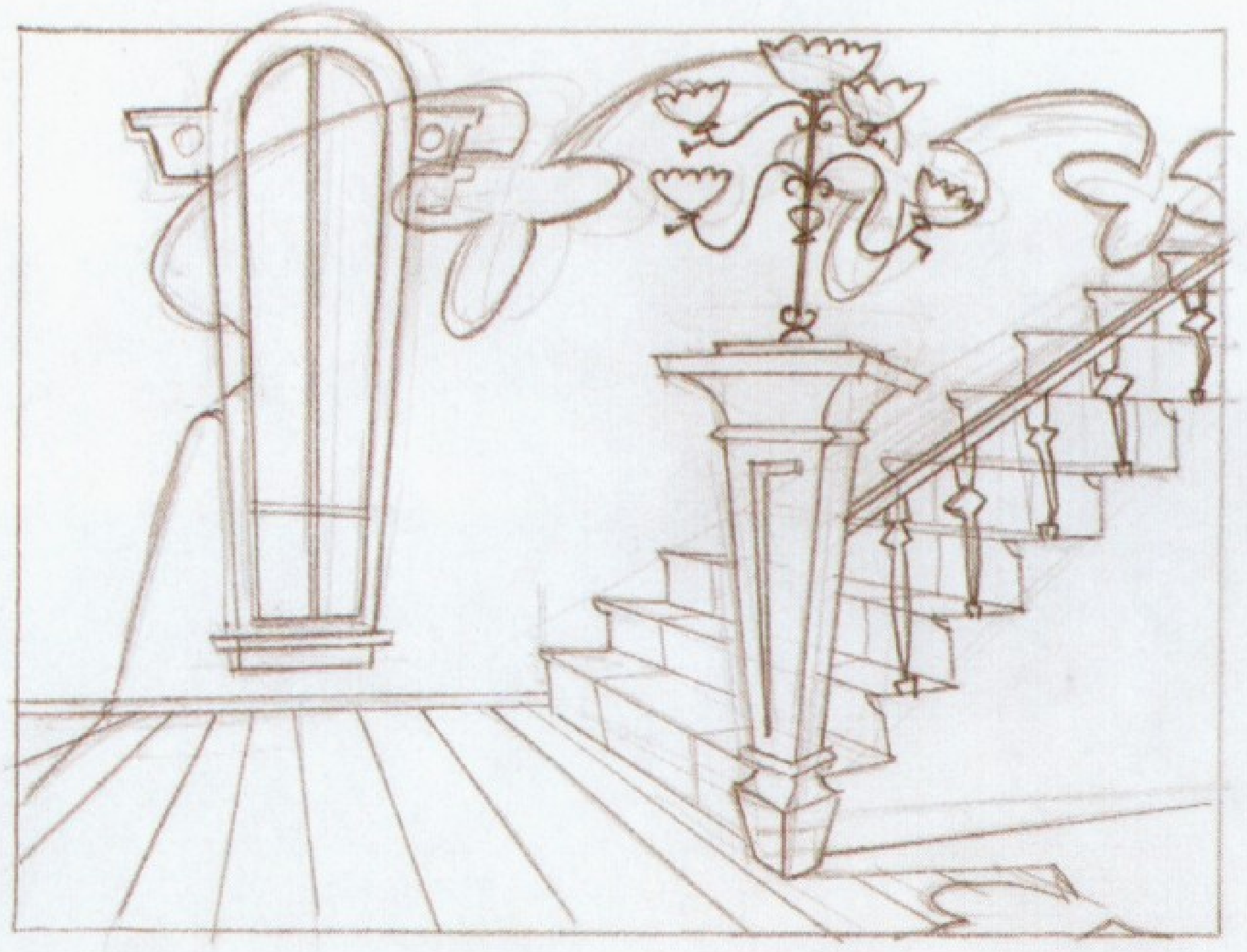
Above: ***Bewitched Bunny* (1954)**
Director: Chuck Jones
Background painting by Phil De Guard
based on a layout by Maurice Noble

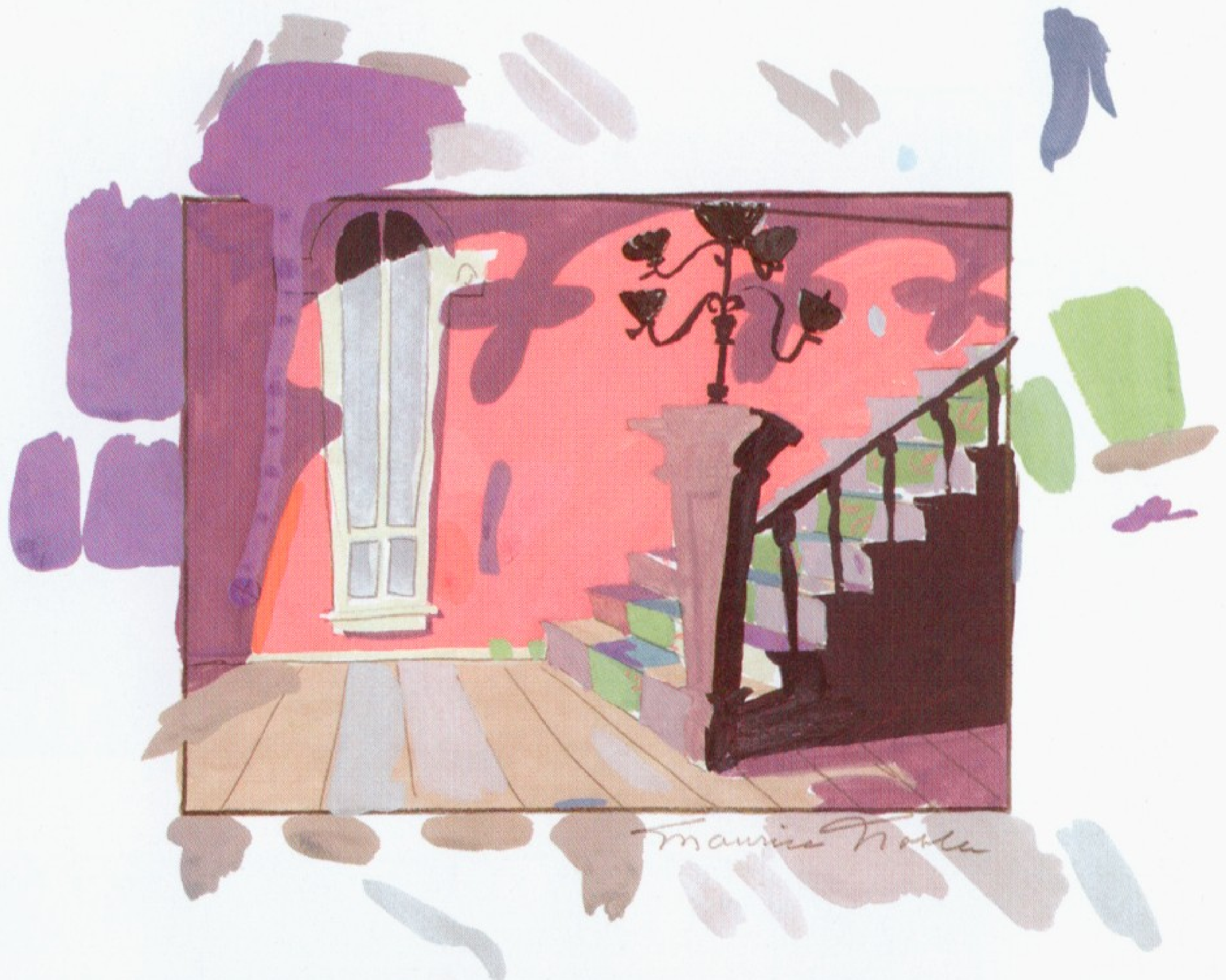


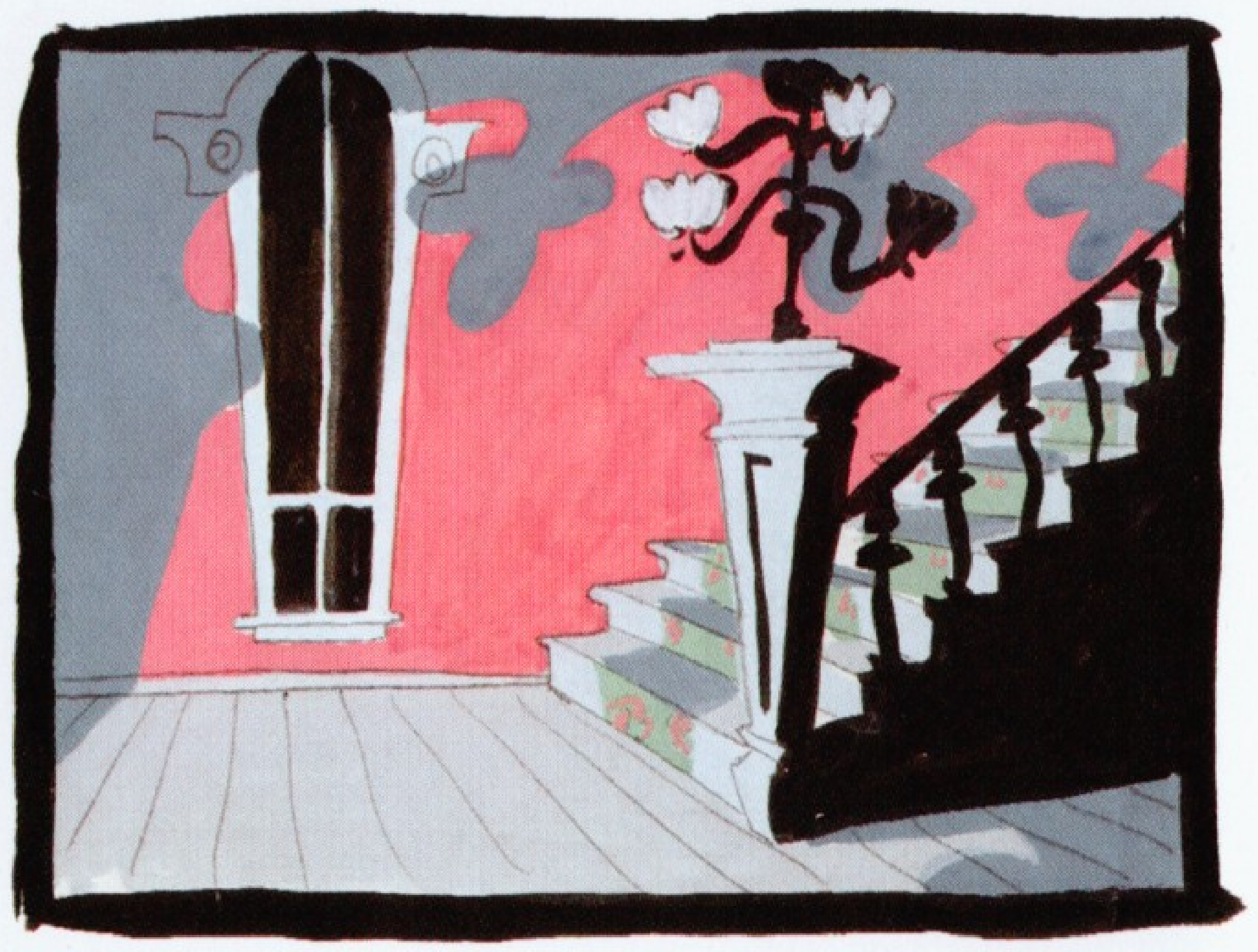
Duck Dodgers in the
***24-1/2th Century* (1953)**
Director: Chuck Jones
Background concept painting
by Maurice Noble

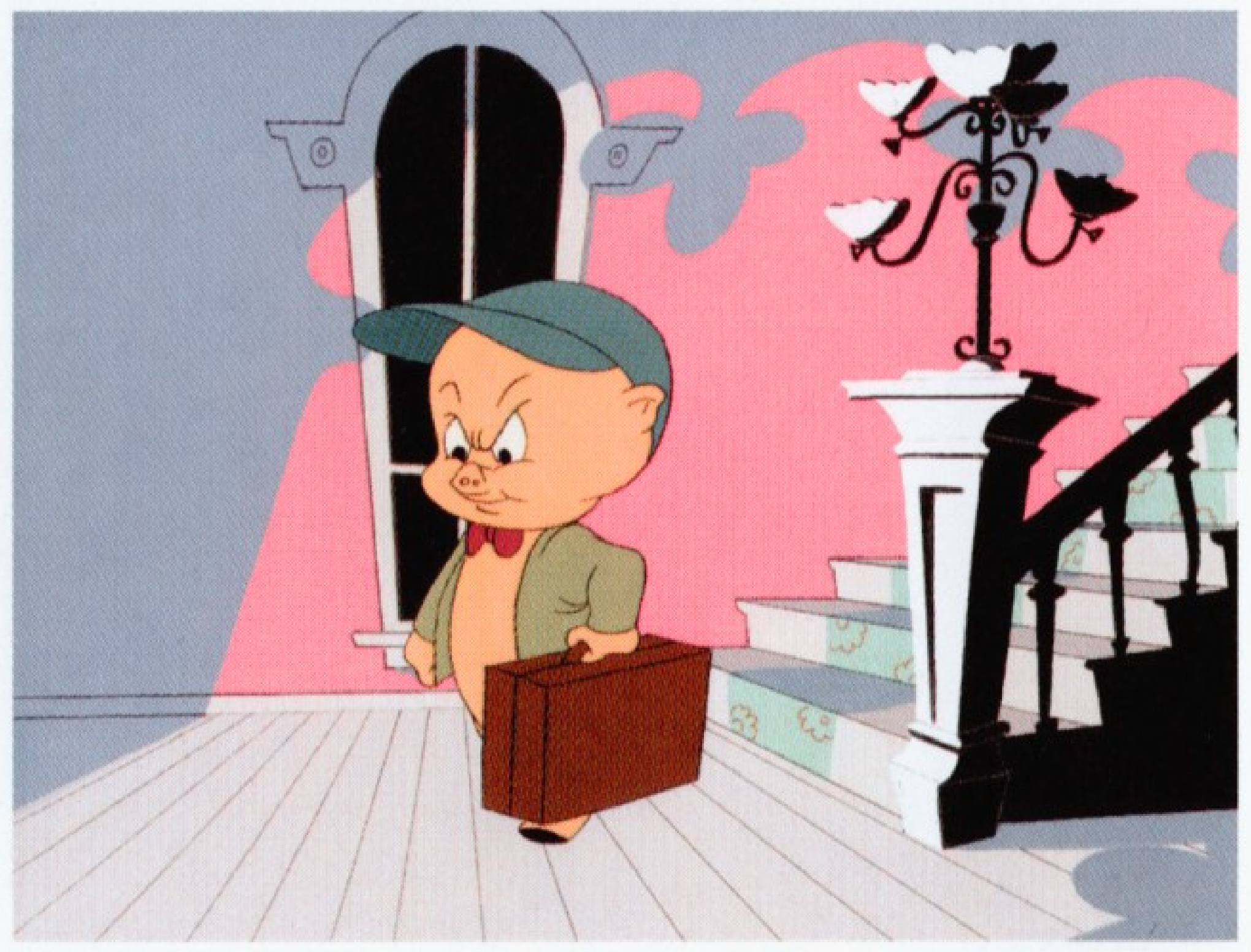
Claws for Alarm

These pieces from the 1954 short *Claws for Alarm* offer a step-by-step account of Noble's background design process. After his initial pencil layout, Noble would create color sketches in which he explored various color combinations. Finally, there is the finished background (painted by Phil De Guard) with a painted Porky Pig cel placed on top.



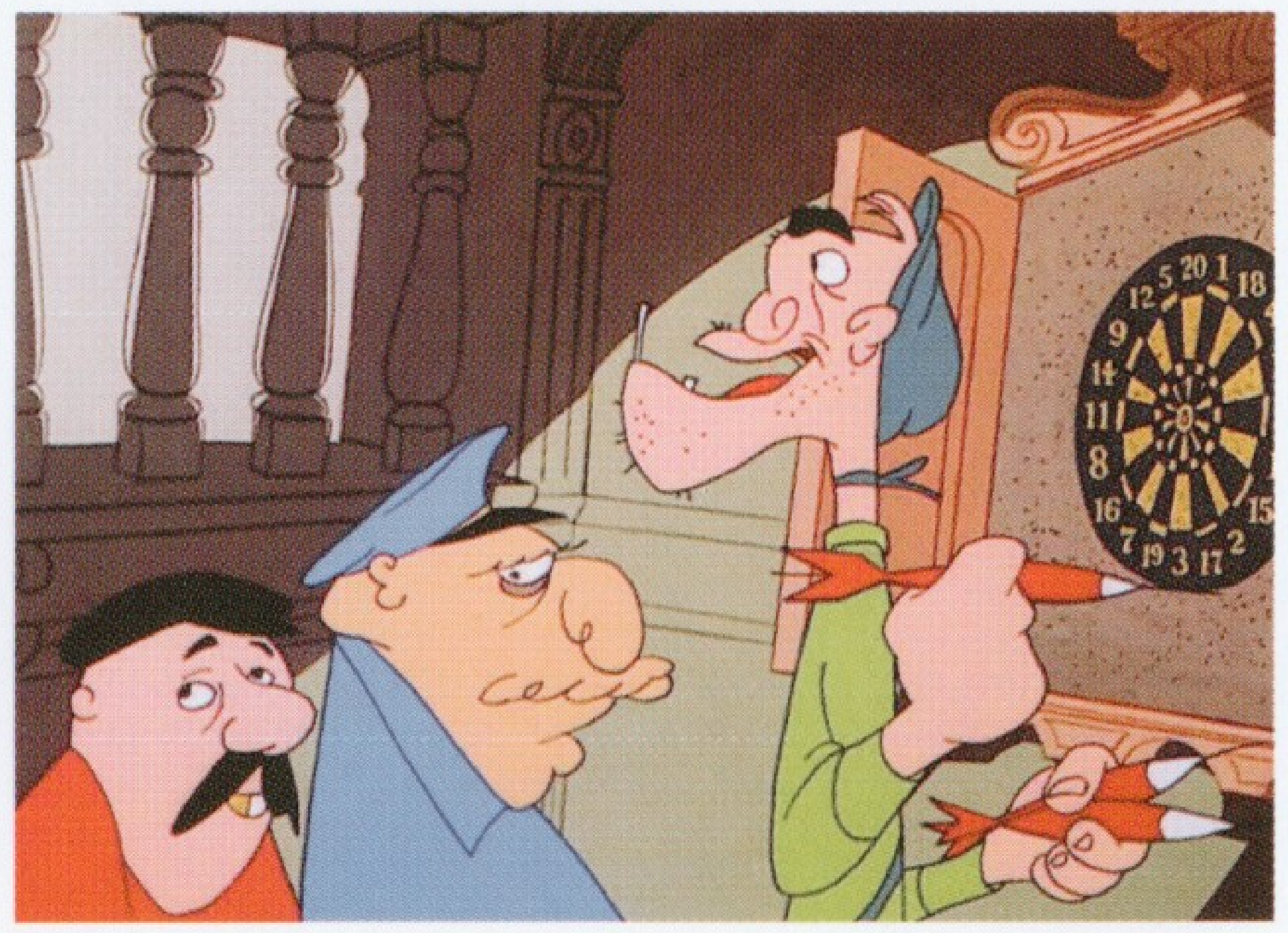


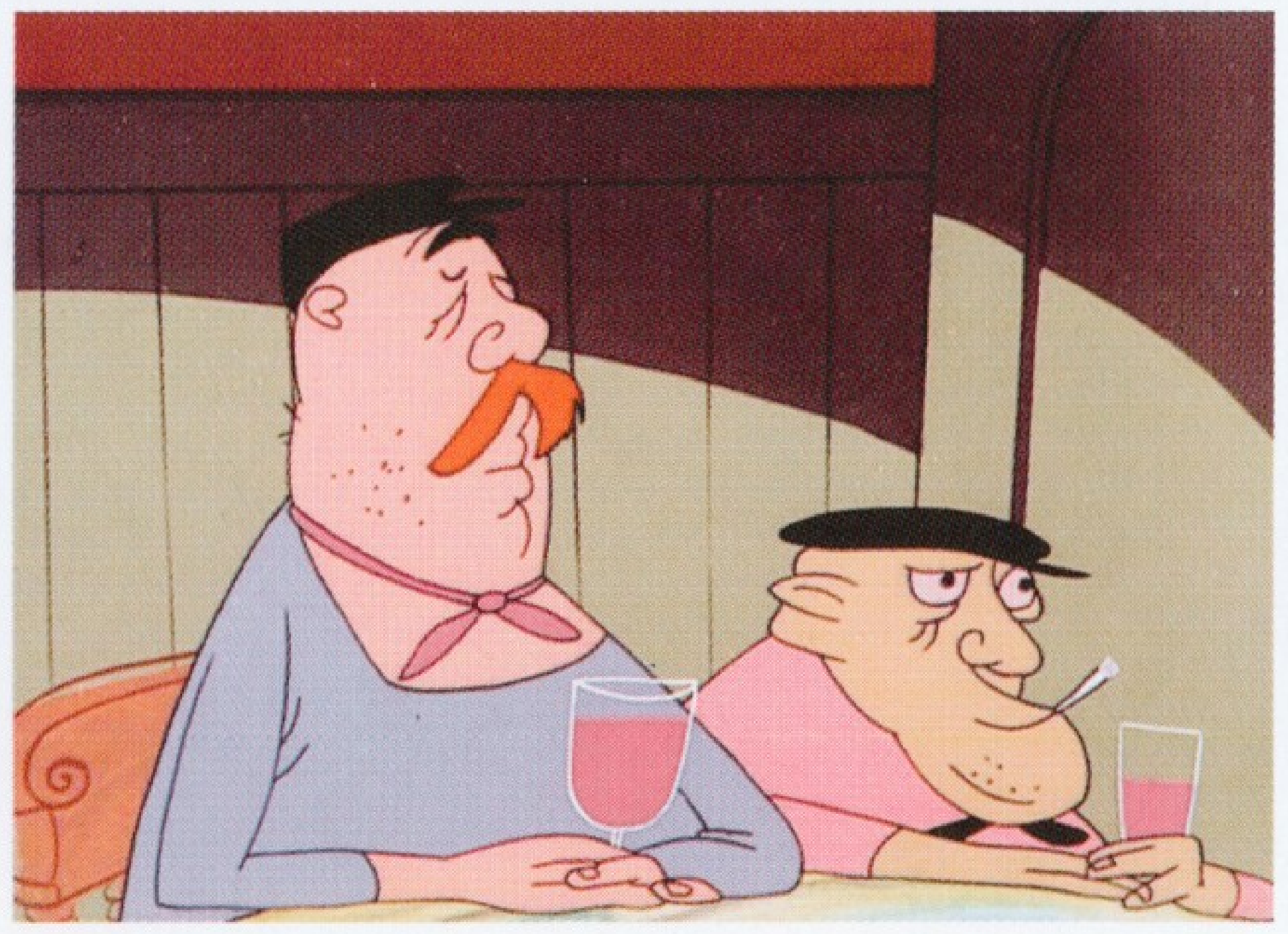


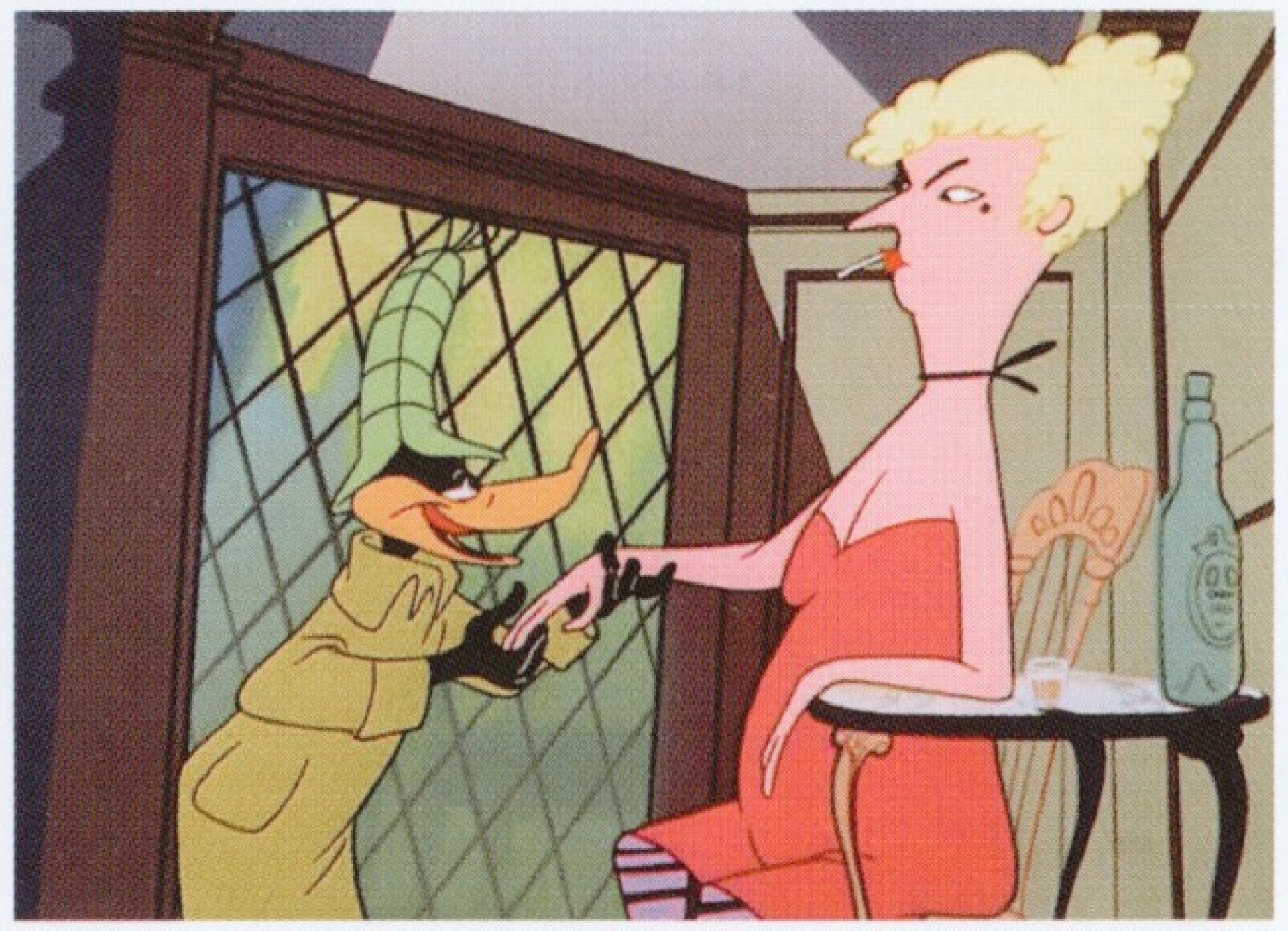


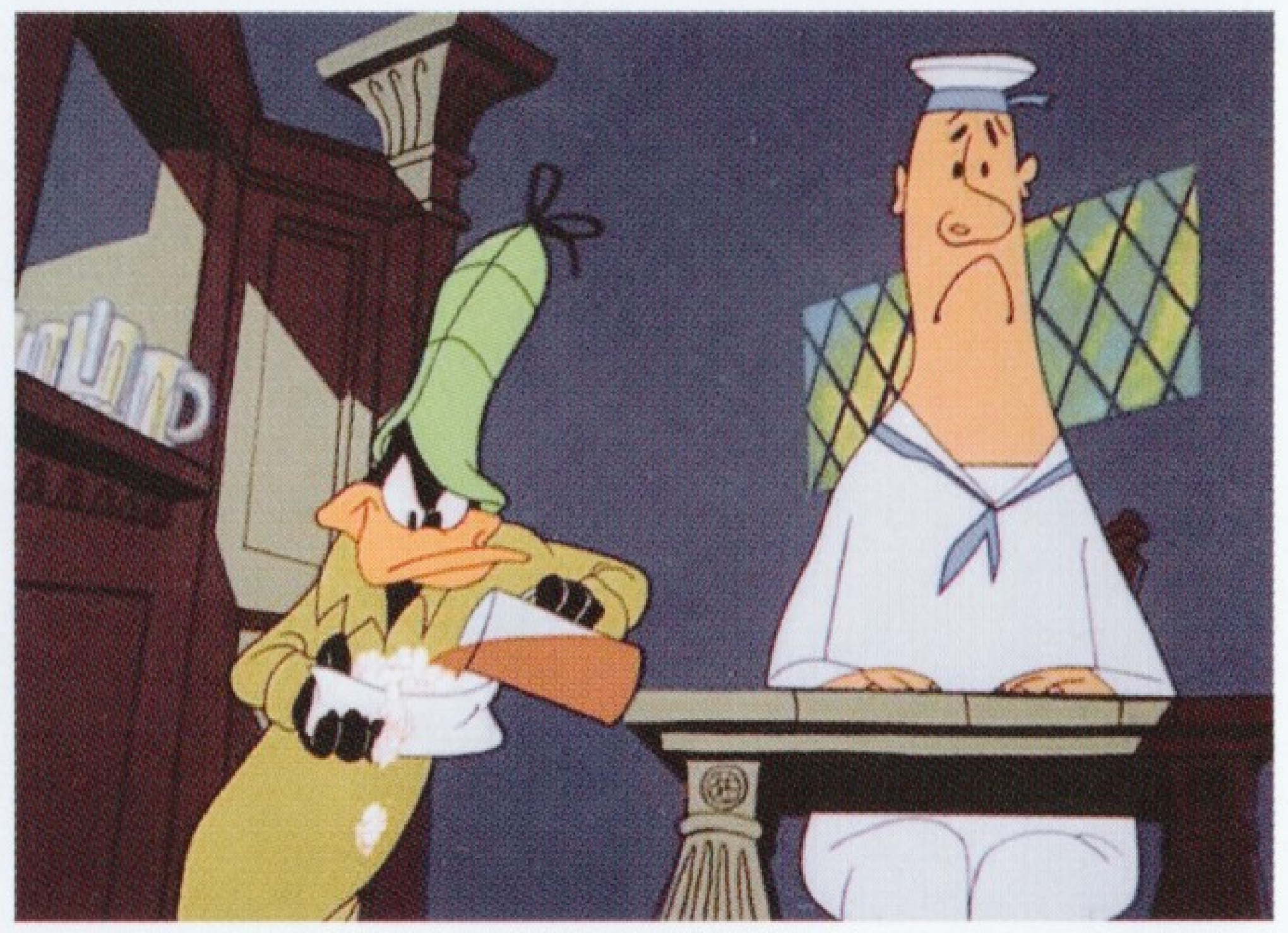
Deduce, You Say

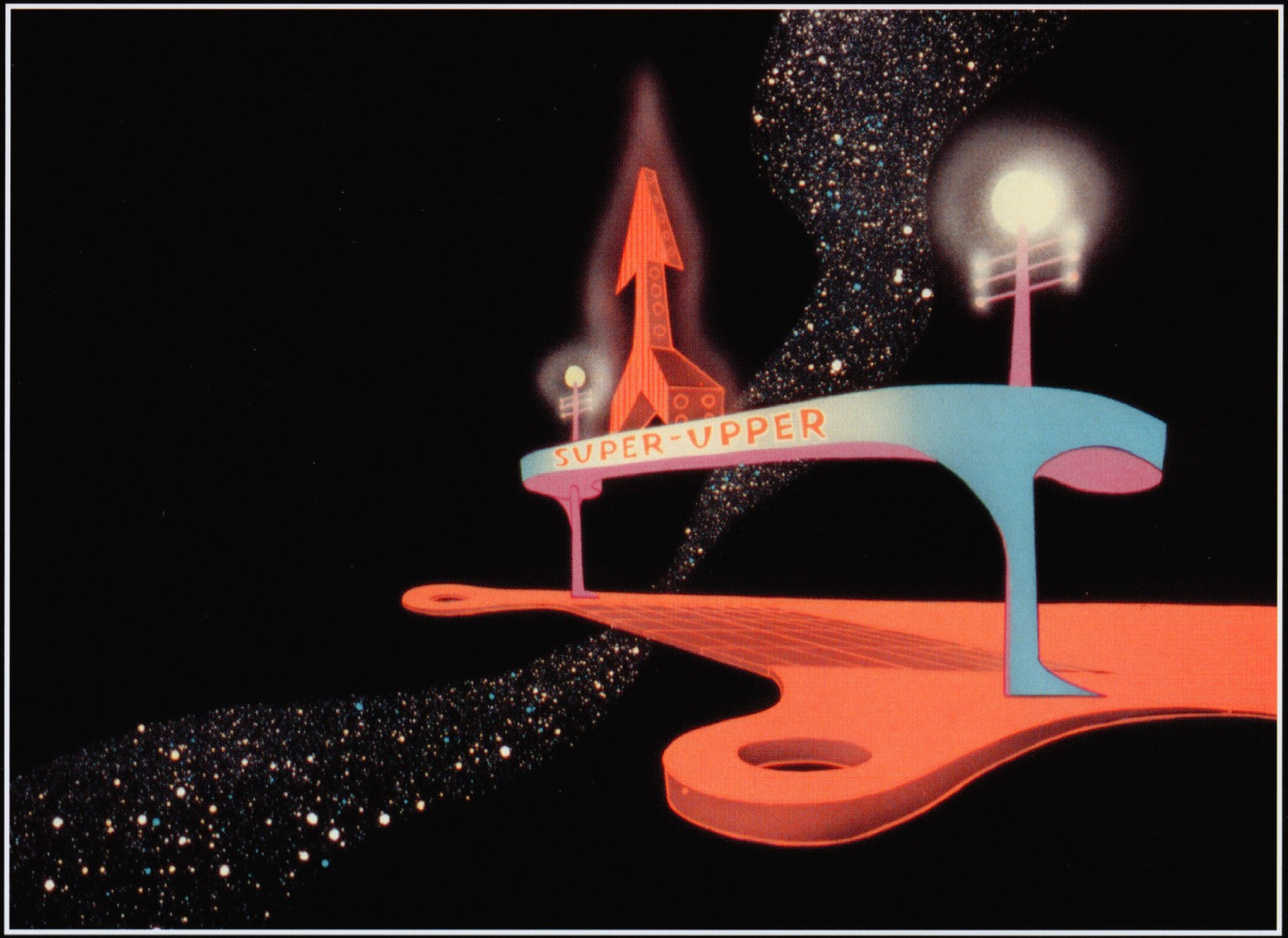
Chuck Jones preferred to work with dimensional, fully articulated characters throughout his career, keeping the stylization in his films limited to the backgrounds. During the 1950s, however, his drawing style was influenced by Ronald Searle and other magazine cartoonists and illustrators, as evident in these pub crawlers from *Deduce, You Say* (1956). Jones also claimed that the drawing of the man in *One Froggy Evening* (1955) was patterned after the graphic style of *New Yorker* cartoonist Sam Cobean (a former animation artist at Disney and Screen Gems), whose "characters always looked to me more like life than life itself."





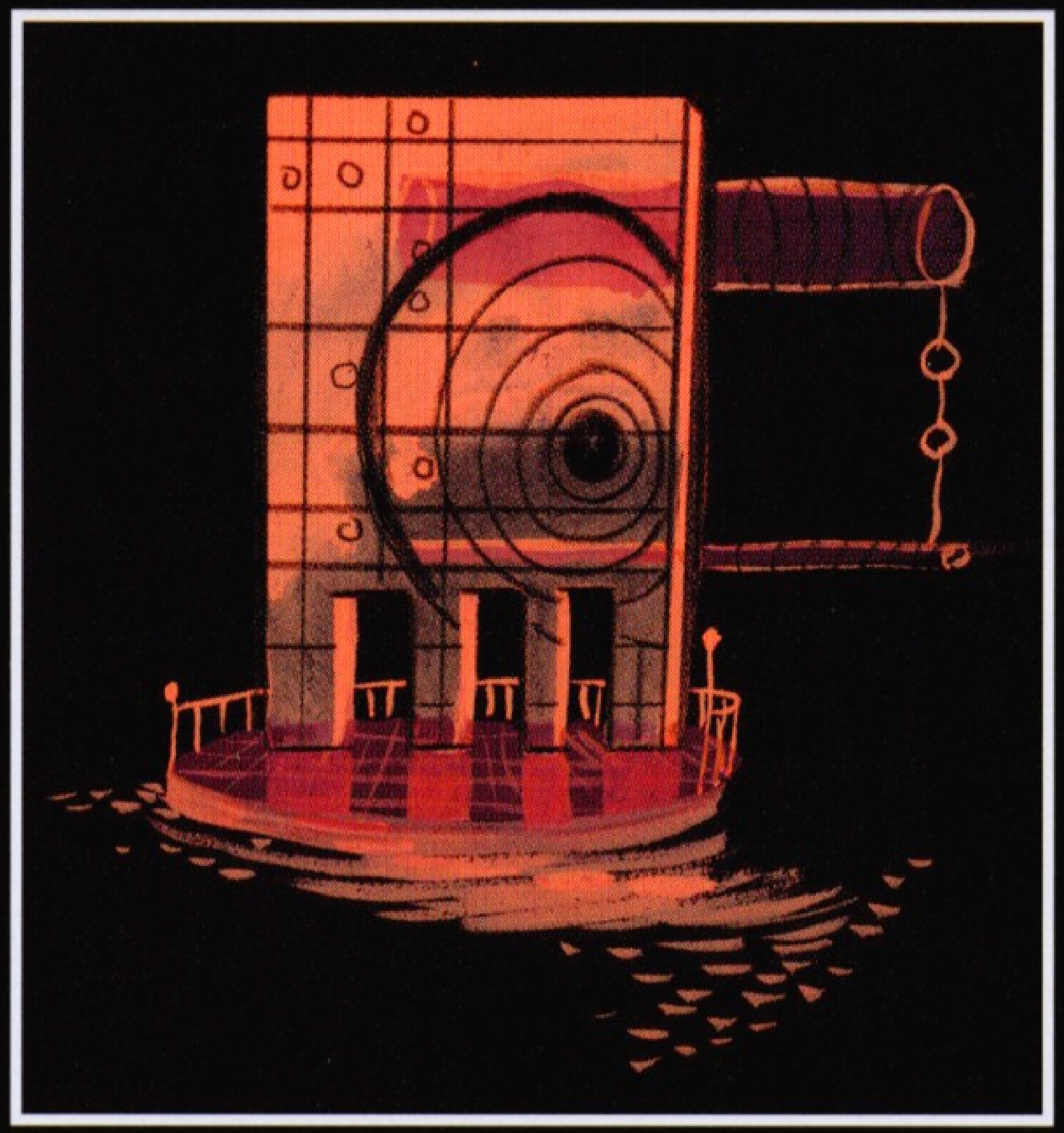


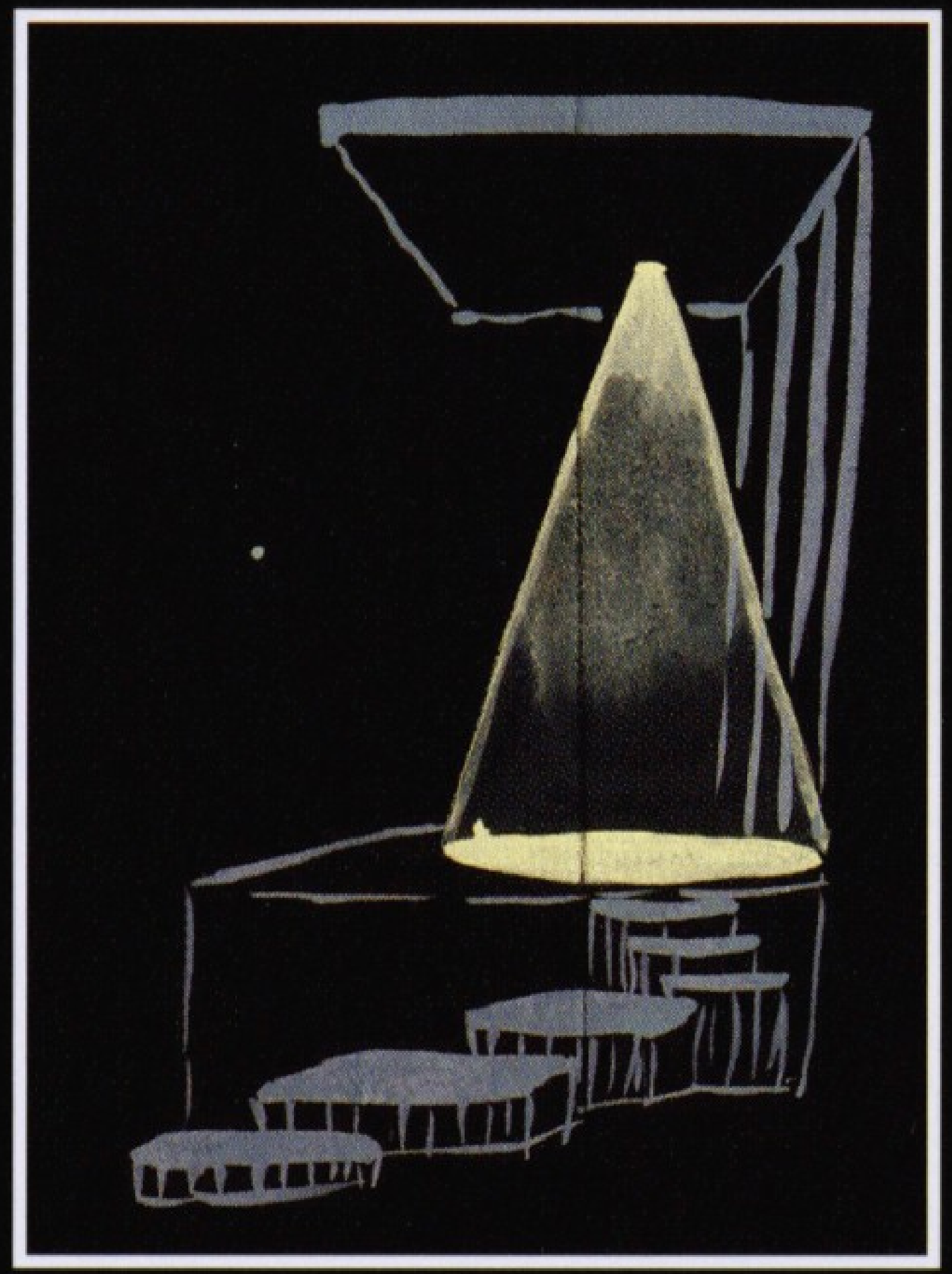


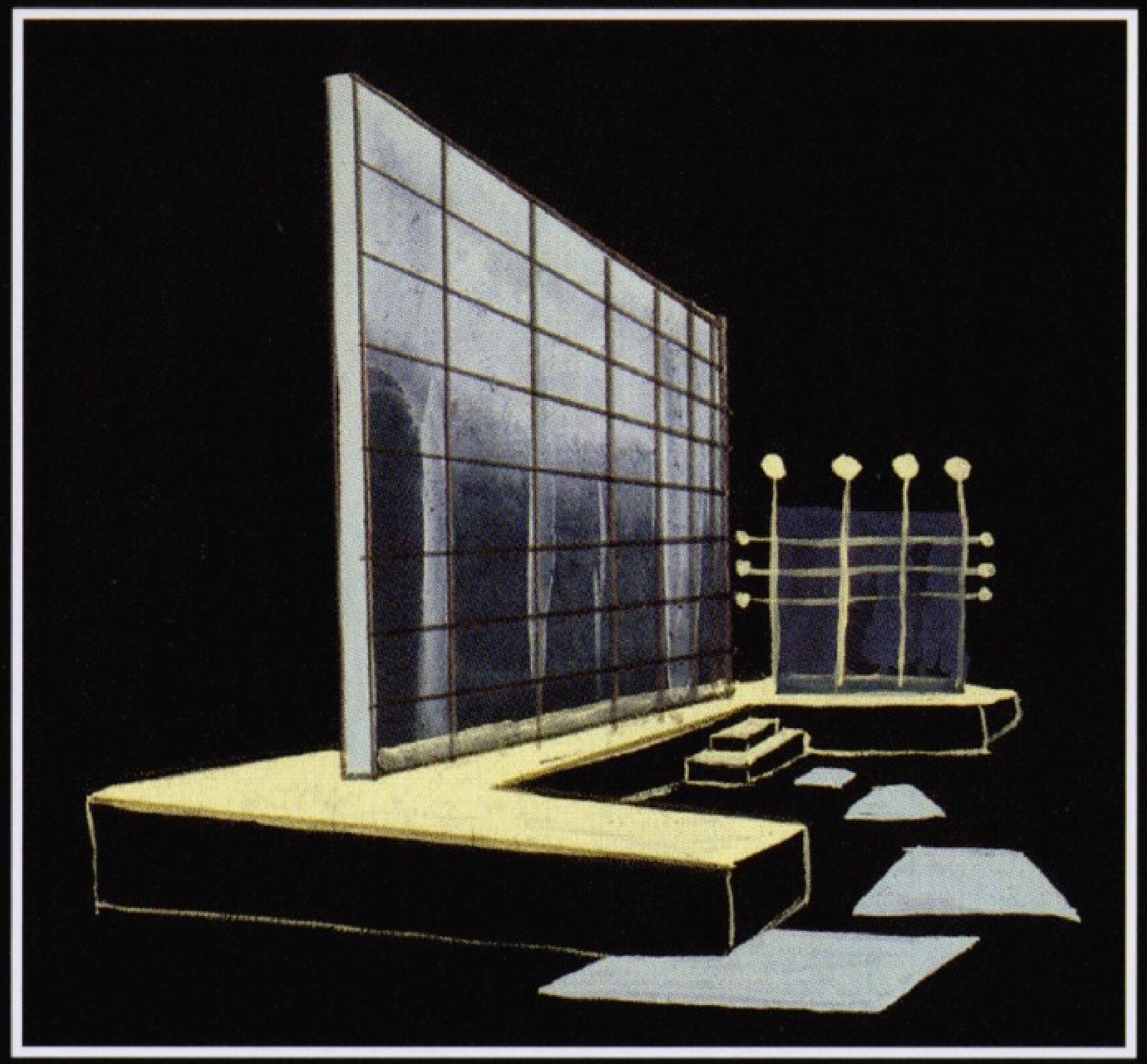


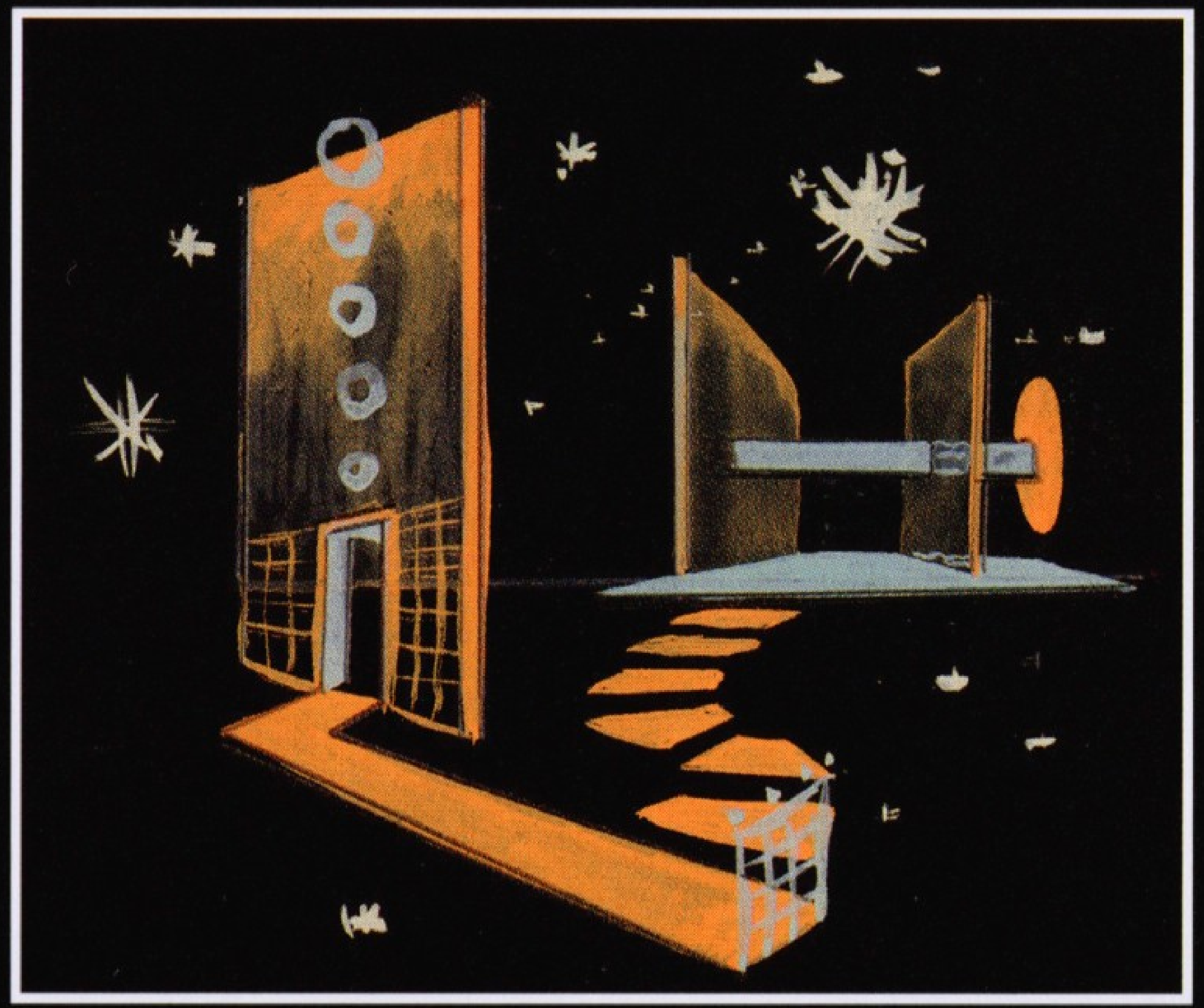
Hare-Way to the Stars

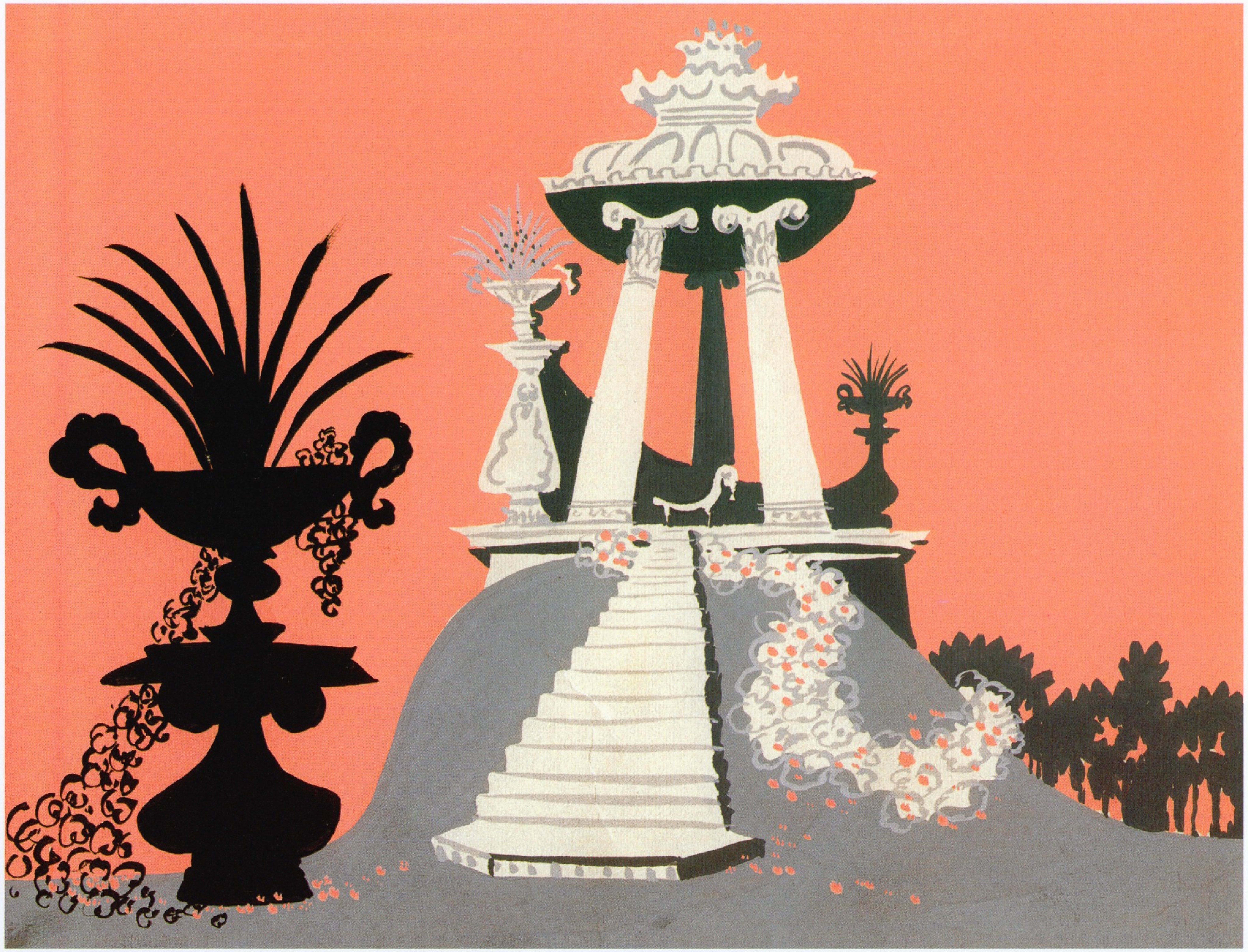
The unique conception of outer space in Chuck Jones's *Hare-Way to the Stars* (1958) was an invention of layout artist Maurice Noble. "We just built a kind of little transparent city suspended in space rather than a planet," Jones recalled. "That was Maurice's idea, to use those hunks of what looked like transparent plastic." These concept paintings of space structures (bottom) were painted on thin black paper to intensify the effect of flotation in outer space. The same black paper was used in the film's finished background paintings (left). Noble firmly believed that development art should be created with the same materials that were going to be used in the finished film, and he always used standard opaque cel paints for color studies instead of markers, pencils, and other materials that weren't available to his background painter, Phil De Guard.





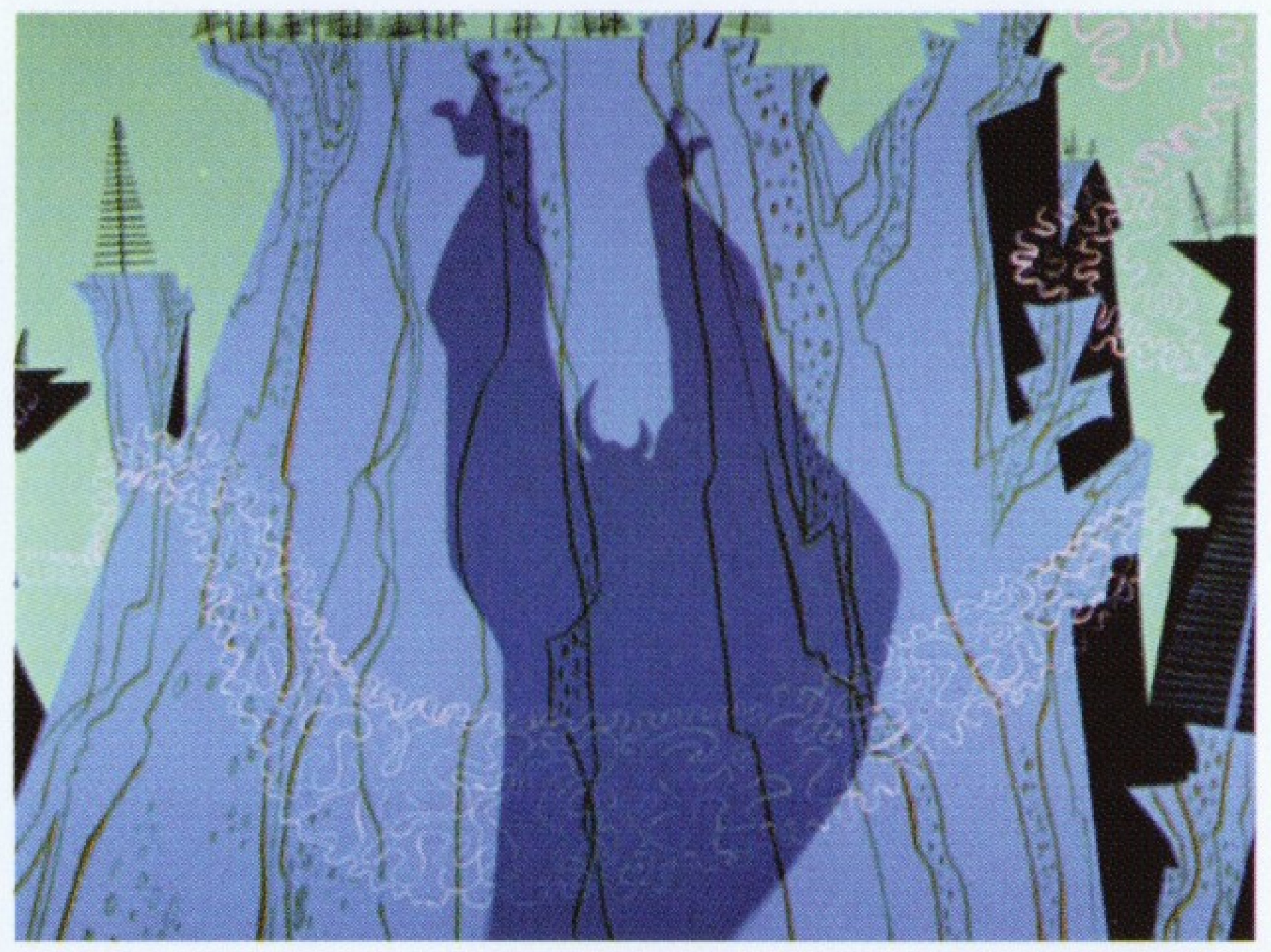


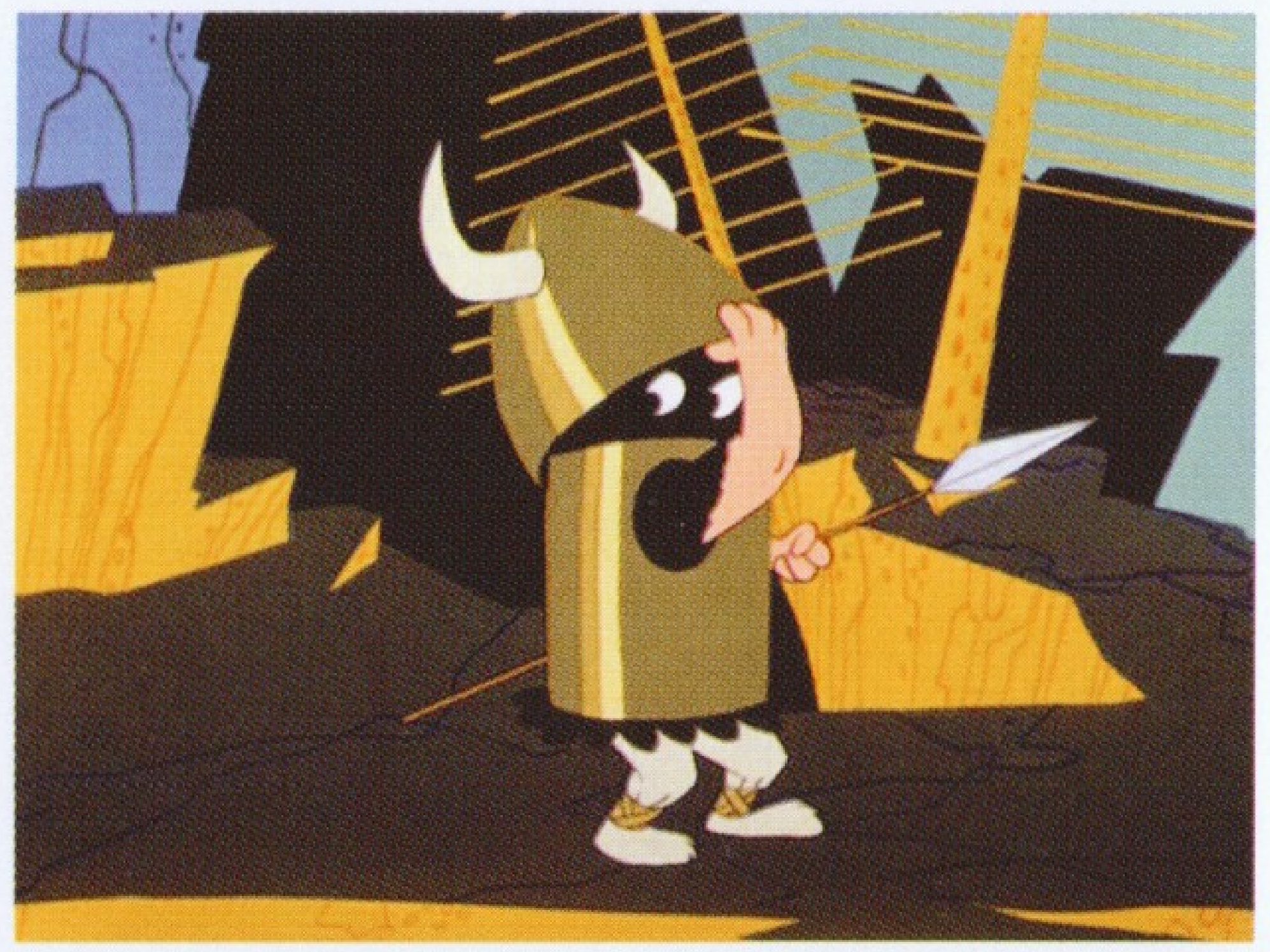


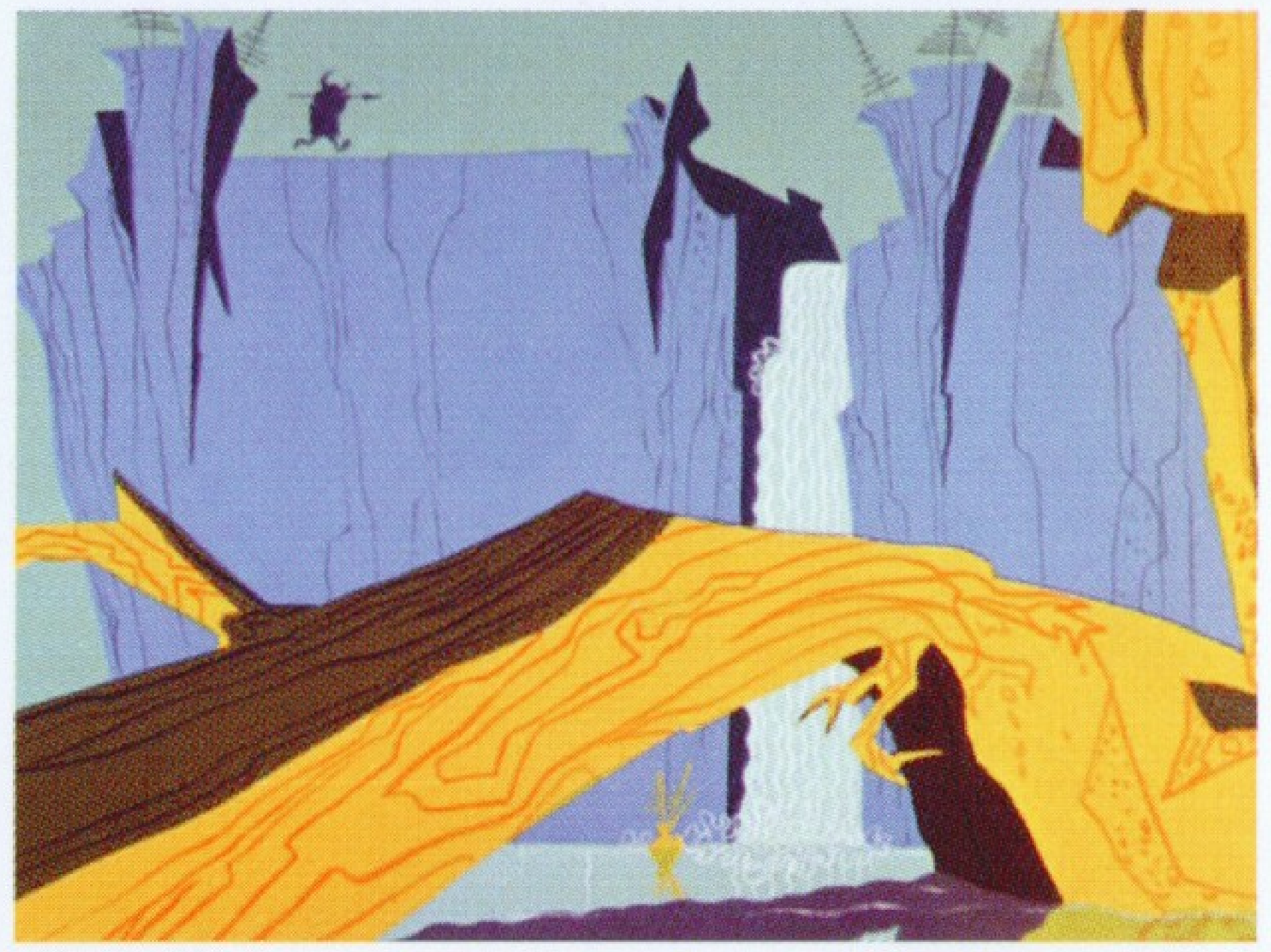


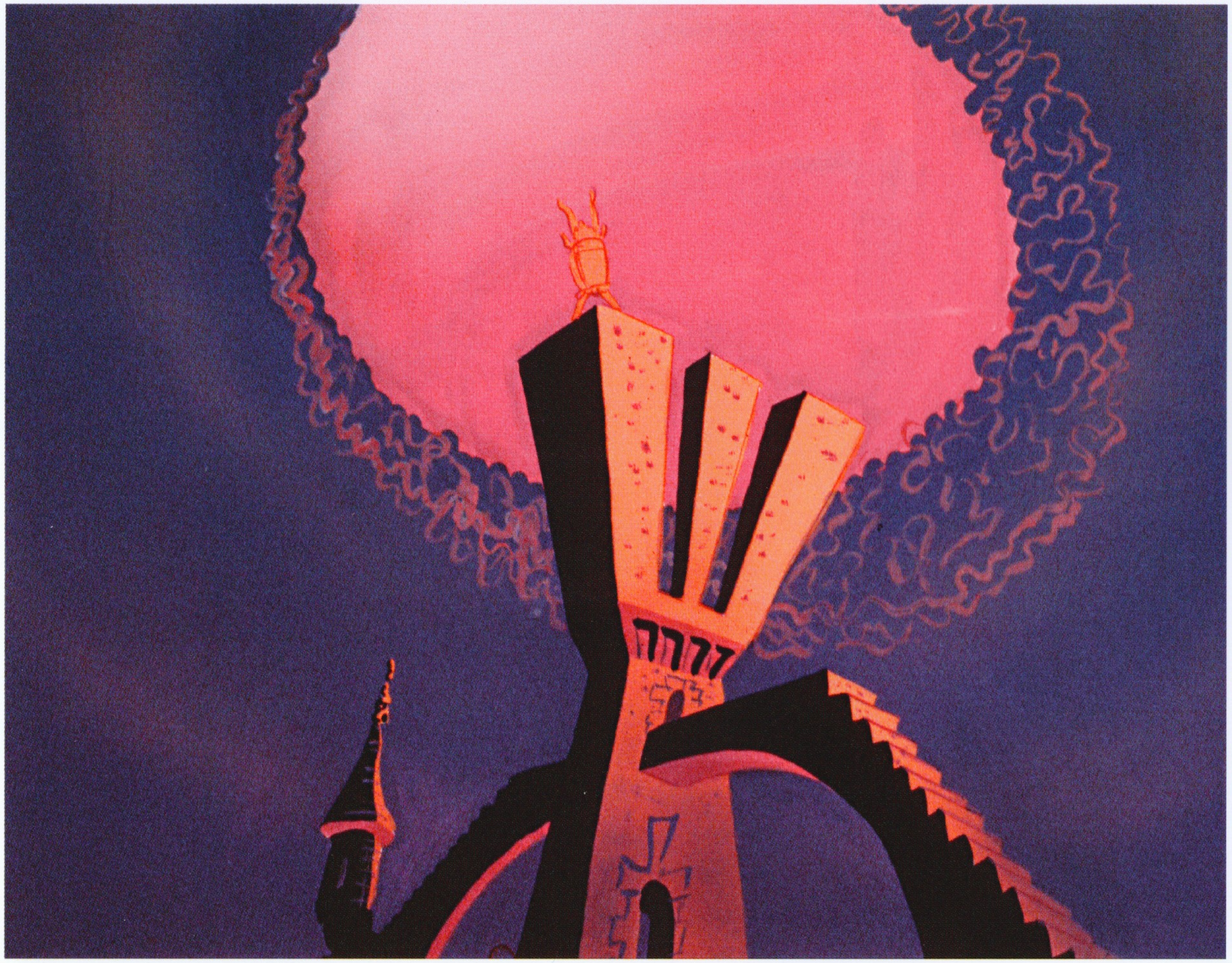
WHAT'S OPERA, DOC?

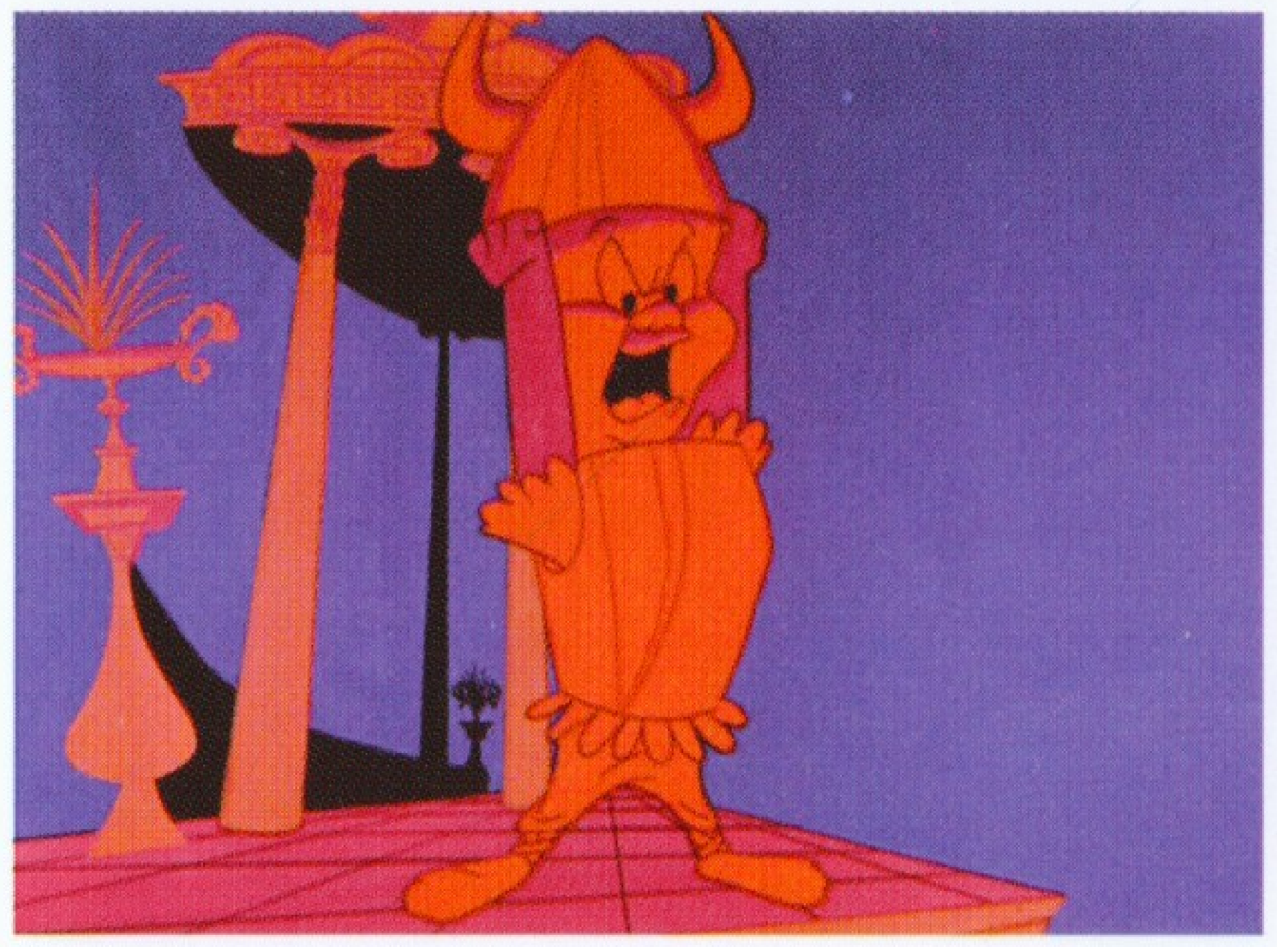
One need look no further than *What's Opera, Doc?* (1957) for the definitive Maurice Noble cartoon. This is Noble at his most graphically ambitious, his most unrelentingly decorative, his most playfully extravagant. It was enough to prompt Friz Freleng to ask Noble, "What kind of shit is this?" But the overblown production design is completely appropriate in keeping with Chuck Jones's outlandish satirical concept for the short—an attempt to condense a fourteen-hour Wagner opera down to six minutes, starring Bugs and Elmer. On graphically driven projects such as this, Noble collaborated closely with director Jones to achieve the maximum design impact. Noble's graphic treatment is in evidence throughout the film; some of his ideas for the film included having a tiny Elmer Fudd cast a gigantic shadow across a mountainside; the mushy Greek "love castle" with its syrupy pink roses, caricatured vases and columns, and super sway-backed love seat; and the climatic storm sequence, where Elmer is colored entirely in striking pinks and reds.

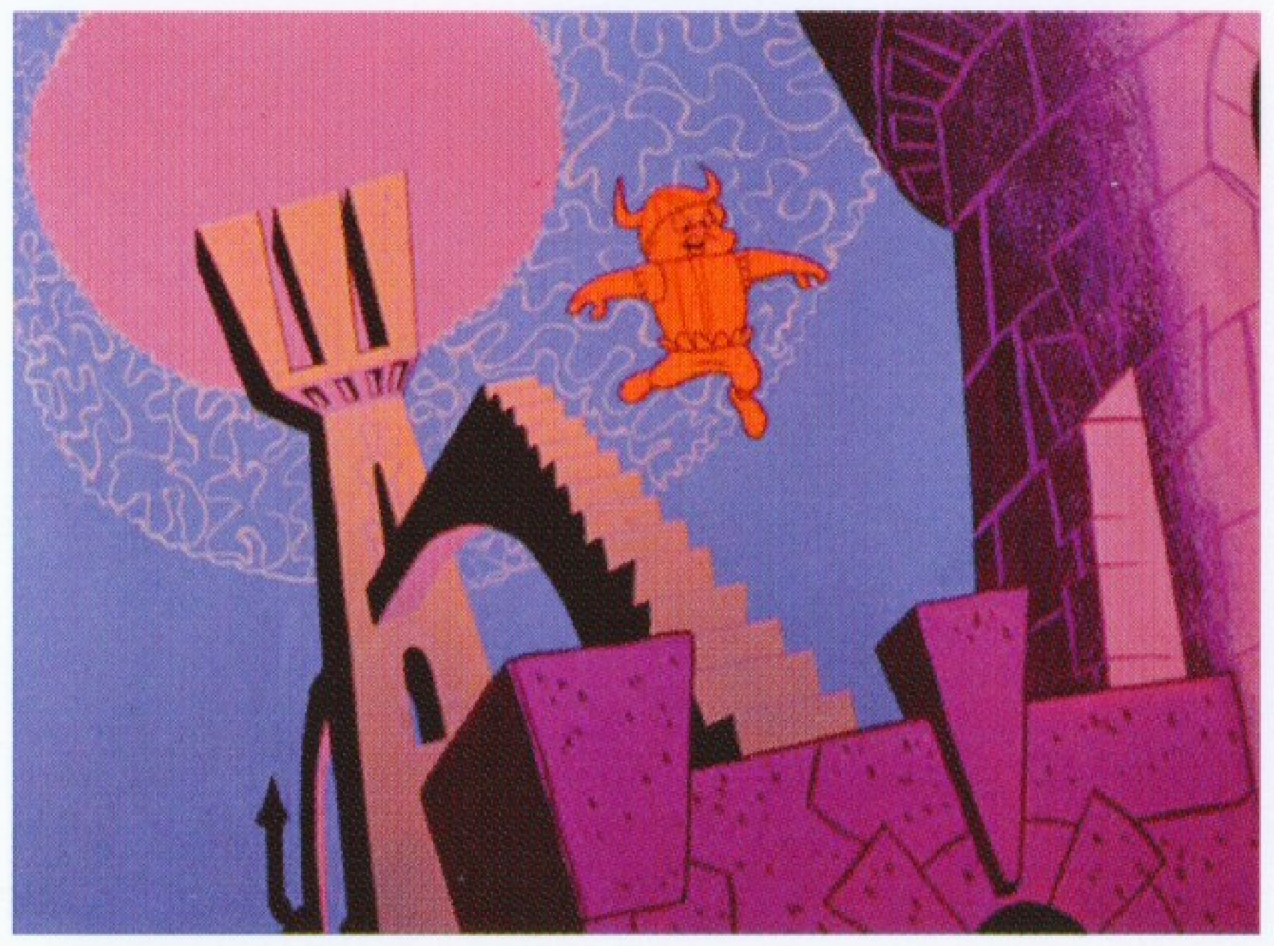


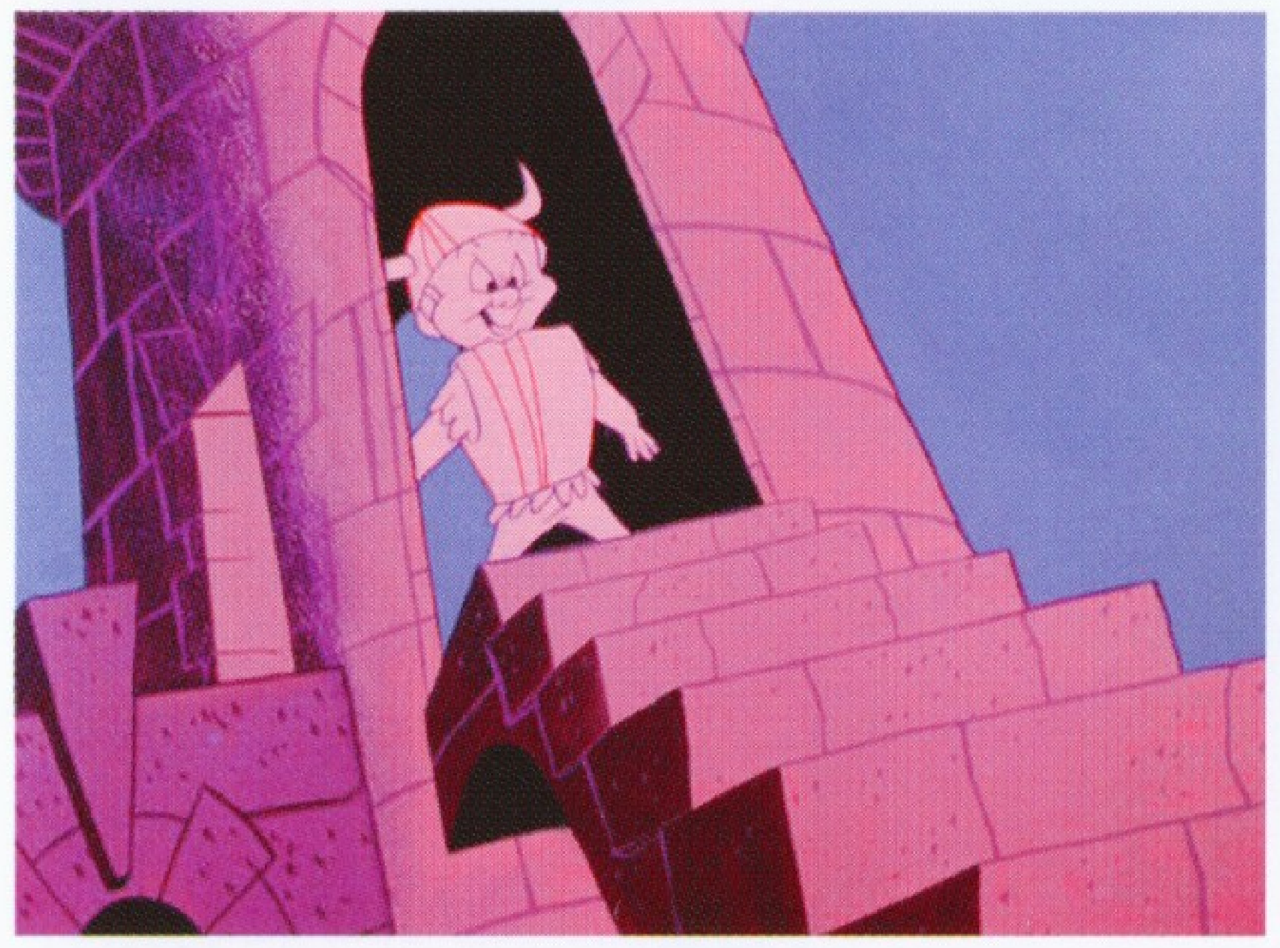


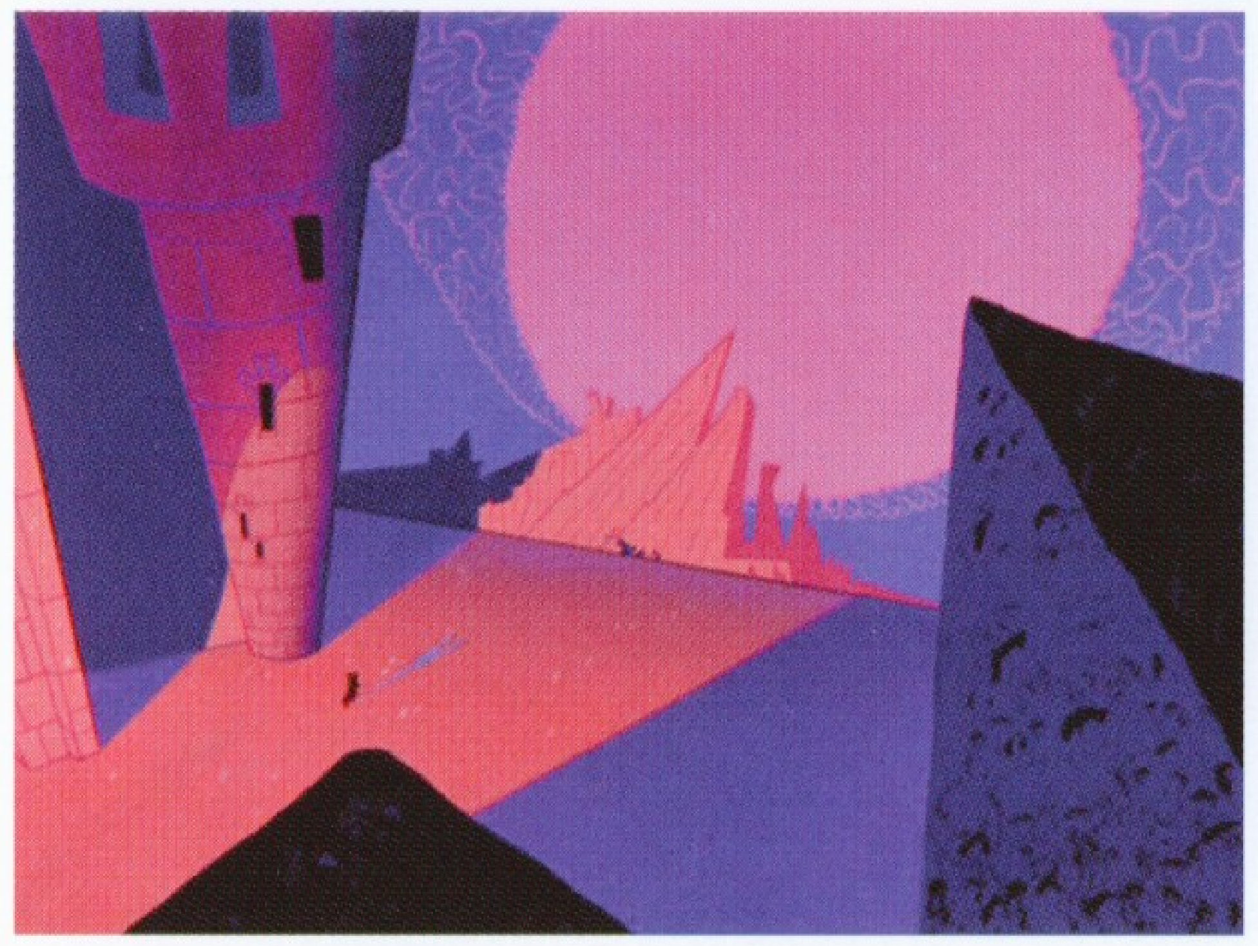






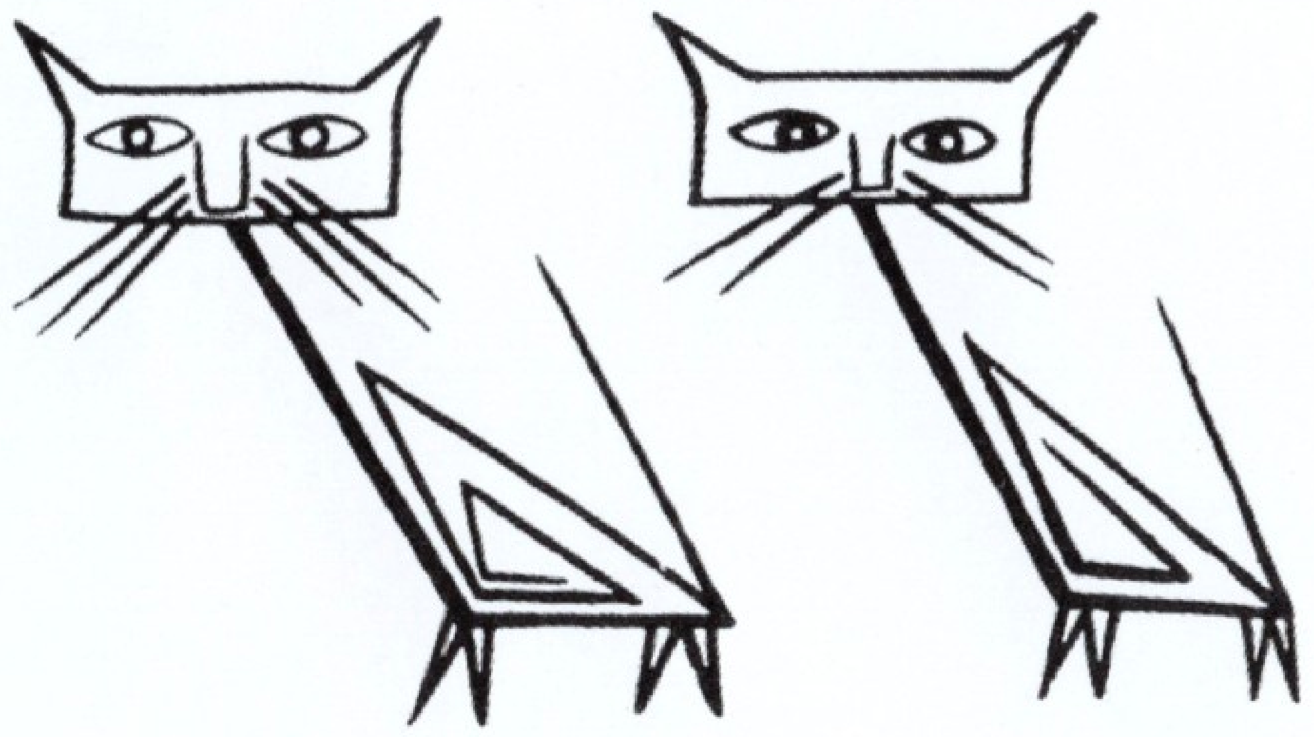






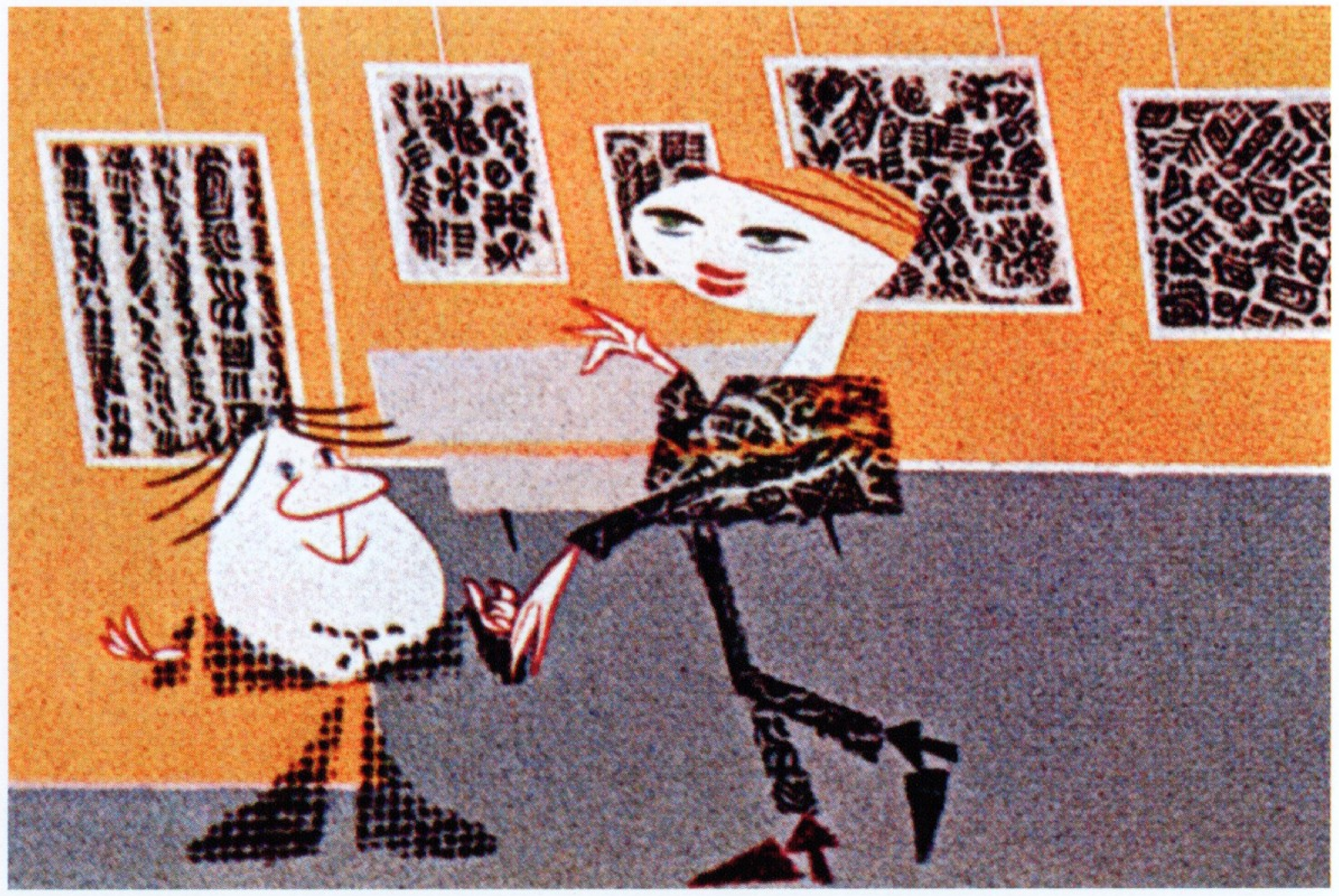
T

THE INTERNATIONAL DESIGN SCENE



Cartoon Modern focuses on the design movement in American animation, but another book of similar length could easily be filled about the avant-garde design scene abroad during the 1950s and early 1960s. Although the fire for animation design had been largely extinguished in the United States by 1960, artists in other countries were picking up the slack and pushing cartoon design into previously unexplored areas. In fact, the bulk of the foreign animation design movement didn't happen in the 1950s but rather in the early 1960s. Between 1959 and 1966, artists in other countries combined the modern style popularized in America with innovative production techniques and challenging stories that were uncommon in American animation. Polish animator Witold Giersz's *The Little Western* (1960) and Canadian filmmaker George Dunning's *The Flying Man* (1962) experimented with oil and watercolor painting directly on glass. Polish animator Jan Lenica used a bold cutout-collage technique in films like *Monsieur Tête* (1959) and *Labyrinth* (1962). Spanish animator Manuel Otéro's *Maître* (1963) indulges in a rich variety of textures and daring shape-oriented design. Italian Bruno Bozzetto created the feature-length *West and Soda* (1965), a parody of American westerns in a cartoony and personal modern style. There were countless graphic innovators in Europe: Henri Gruel, Jean Jabely, Roberto Gavioli, and, particularly, the work of Zagreb Film. Outside of Europe, Japanese animator Osamu Tezuka (creator of *Astro Boy*) produced two design-driven shorts, *The Story of a Certain Street Corner* (1962) and *Pictures at an Exhibition* (1966).

Above: A still from an
Italian commercial
produced by Gamma Films.



***Maître* (1963)**
Director: Manuel Otéro
Film still

Opposite: ***At the Photographer's* (1959)**
Director: Vatroslav Mimica
Production cel
and background

ZAGREB FILM

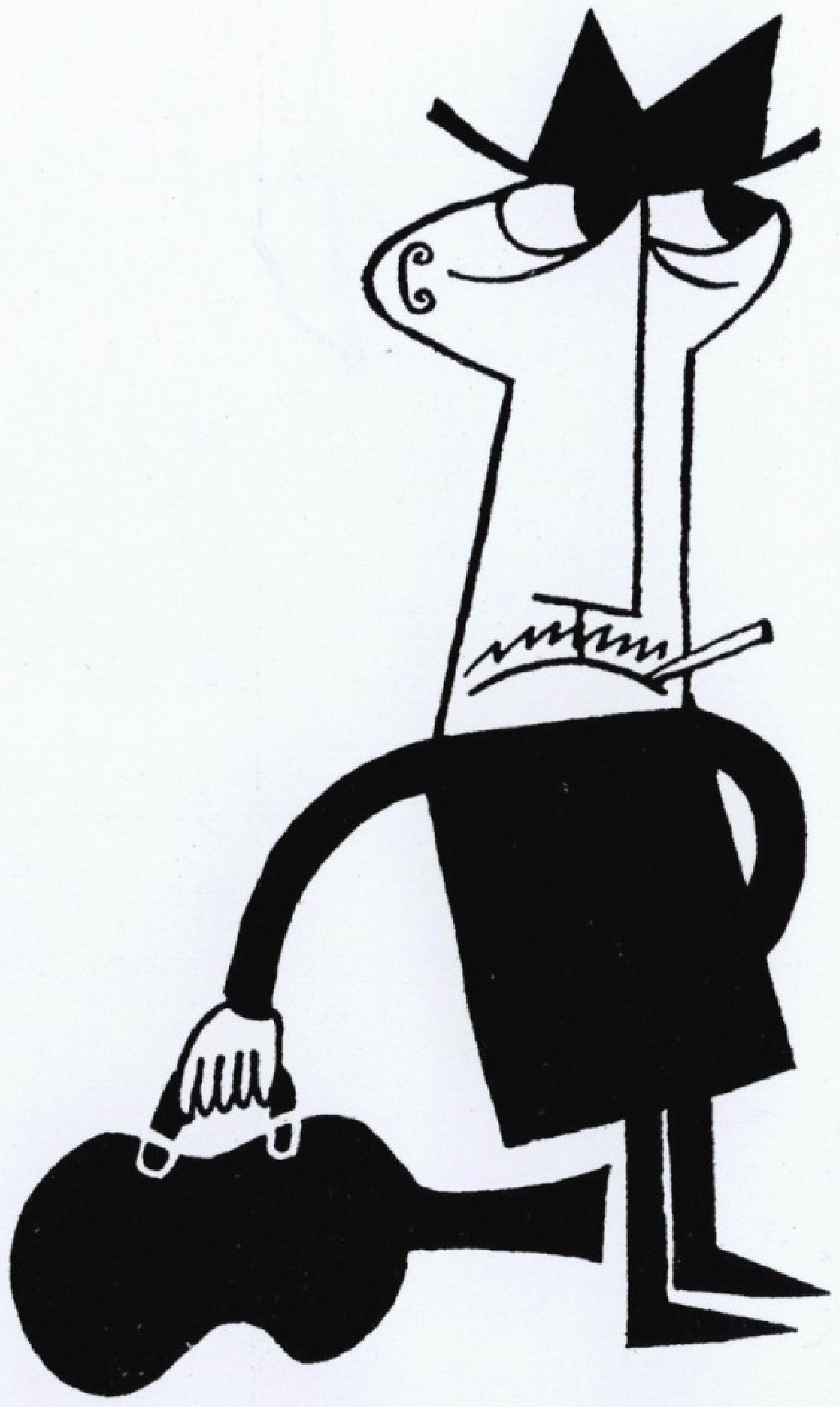
The most significant producer of the modern animated film in Europe was Zagreb Film, located in the former Yugoslavia. President Josip Broz Tito's government practiced a liberal brand of Communism, allowing relatively free creative expression. The Zagreb Film artists were thus free to explore all varieties of styles, techniques, and subject matter, in a studio that was largely subsidized by the government. Though budgets were small and production resources were few, the creative atmosphere was nearly perfect. Artists could experiment without concern for creating recurring cartoon stars, keeping films to a specific length, or targeting films to a particular kind of audience. Furthermore, a failed film would not result in the termination of an artist's job.

Animation in Yugoslavia was not a highly developed art form in the early 1950s. There had been experiments at studios like Duga Film and Zora Film but nothing of great significance. One of the turning points in Yugoslavian animation was when a number of future Zagreb Film artists saw the first UPA film that had made its way into Yugoslavia: John Hubley's animated bridges for the live-action feature *The Four Poster* (1952). This film gave the Yugoslavian artists a glimpse of the new styles in animation, and when Zagreb Film started its animation department in 1956, the artists worked from this foundation of UPA modernity.

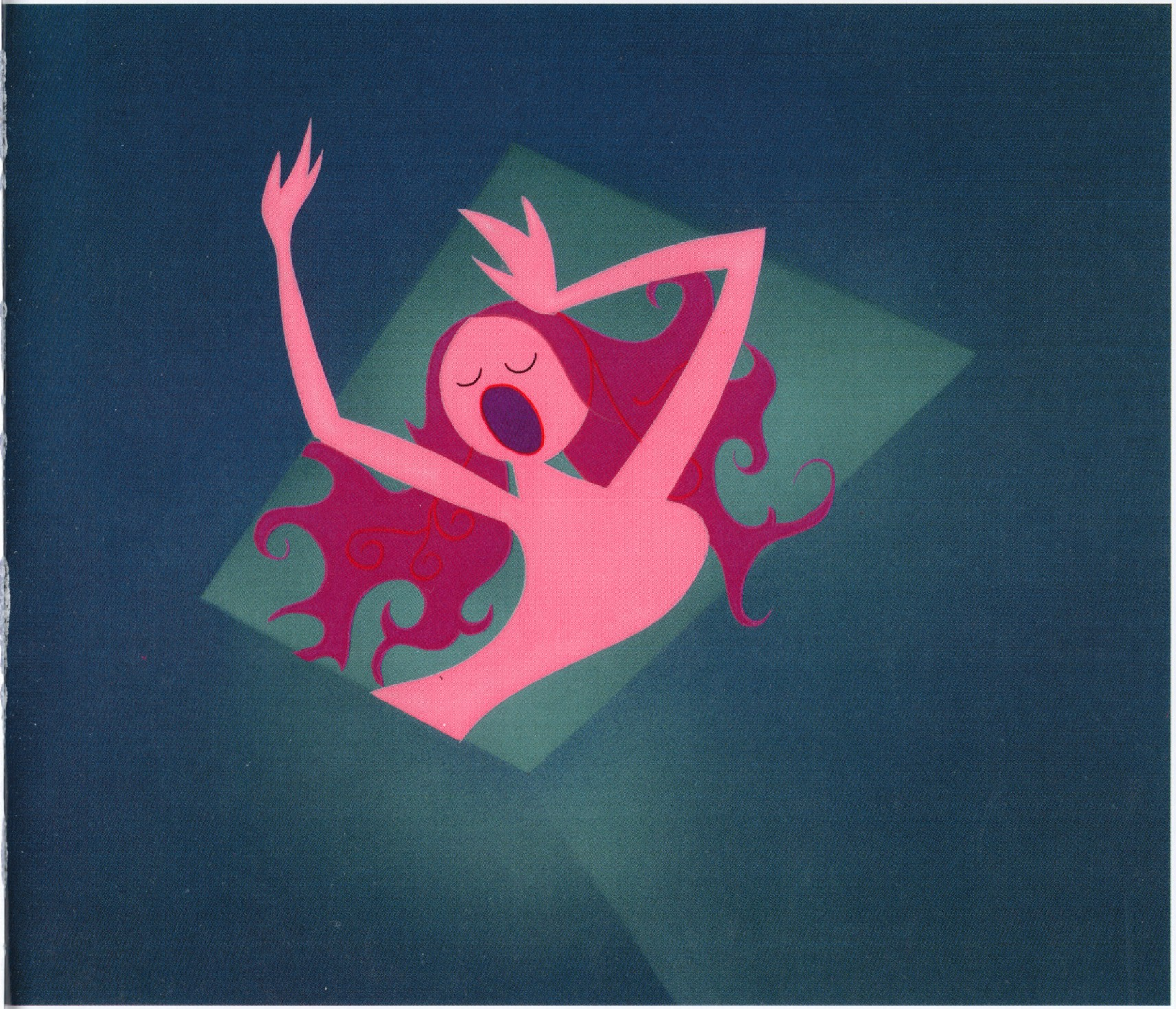
In short order, the studio's films had made an impact on the world stage. A screening of Zagreb films at the Cannes Film Festival in 1958 established Zagreb's position as an innovator in animation, and French film critic Georges Sadoul promptly dubbed the studio's aesthetic the "Zagreb School of Animation." The unique flavor of the Zagreb films stems not from a particular style or look but from their unconventional production methods. The studio functioned more like a collective of independent artists than a studio in the strict hierarchical sense of American animation. Designers, background painters, and animators worked with different directors so there was a constant flow of ideas throughout the entire studio. An artist like Boris Kolar assumed many creative roles early in his career: sometimes he would design films, sometimes paint backgrounds, and sometimes animate. From his varied experiences, he evolved into a complete filmmaker, and when he began writing and directing his own films, he turned out excellent shorts like *The Boy and the Ball* (1960), *Boomerang* (1962), and *Woof-Woof* (1964). Director Dušan Vukotić points out that only one person animated each film at Zagreb Film: "We no longer have in-betweeners, people who mechanically fill in the phases between two extremes: they are no longer mechanical phases but determined rhythms which have a special meaning and which are determined by each artist independently of some general rule."

Vukotić was a principal figure in the studio's history. He not only helped establish the animation division of Zagreb Film but also inspired the artists to pursue a modern expressive approach to animated filmmaking, free of the canons and dogmas of conventional animation production. He directed many notable films in the early history of the studio: *Playful Robot* (the first film produced by Zagreb Film, in 1956), *Cowboy Jimmie* (1957), *Concerto for Sub-machine Gun* (1958, designed by Boris Kolar), and *Piccolo* (1959). His most famous film, *Ersatz* (1961), which he designed, directed, and animated, was the first non-American animated film to win the Oscar.

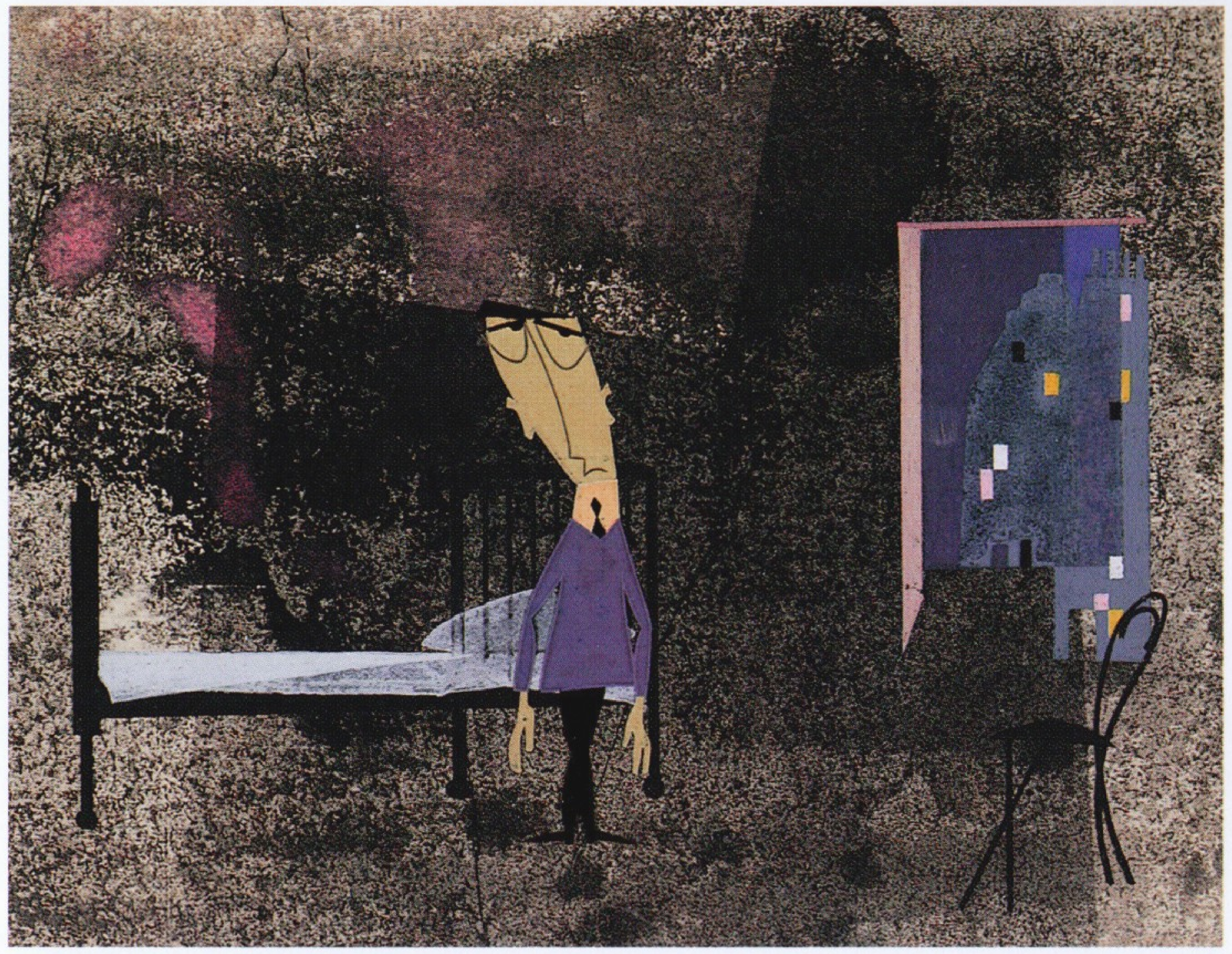
Aleksandar Marks was another top designer at the studio, responsible for designing *Cowboy Jimmie* (1957), *Alone* (1958), *At the Photographer's* (1959), *The Inspector Returns Home* (1959), *The Egg* (1959), and *Perpetuum & Mobile, Ltd.* (1961). Vladimir Kristl's tenure at the studio was short, but his films *The Great Jewel Robbery* (1959, nominally directed by Mladen Feman) and *Don Quixote* (1961) defy visual categorization and stand apart visually from the already eclectic Zagreb catalog. There are dozens of Zagreb films with beautiful cartoon designs; to name a few: *Opening Night* (1957, directed by Nikola Kostelac, designed by Vjekoslav Kostanjšek), *A Crazy Heart* (1959, directed by Nikola Kostelac, designed by Vjekoslav Kostanjšek), *All the Drawings of the Town* (1959, directed by Ivo Vrbanić, designed by Ivo Kalina), *Low Midnight* (1960, directed by Mladen Feman, designed by Aleksandar Marks), *Two Snails* (1960, directed by Branko Ranitović, designed by Branislav Nemet), and *The Man and His Shadow* (1960, directed by Dragutin Vunak, designed by Aleksandar Srneć).

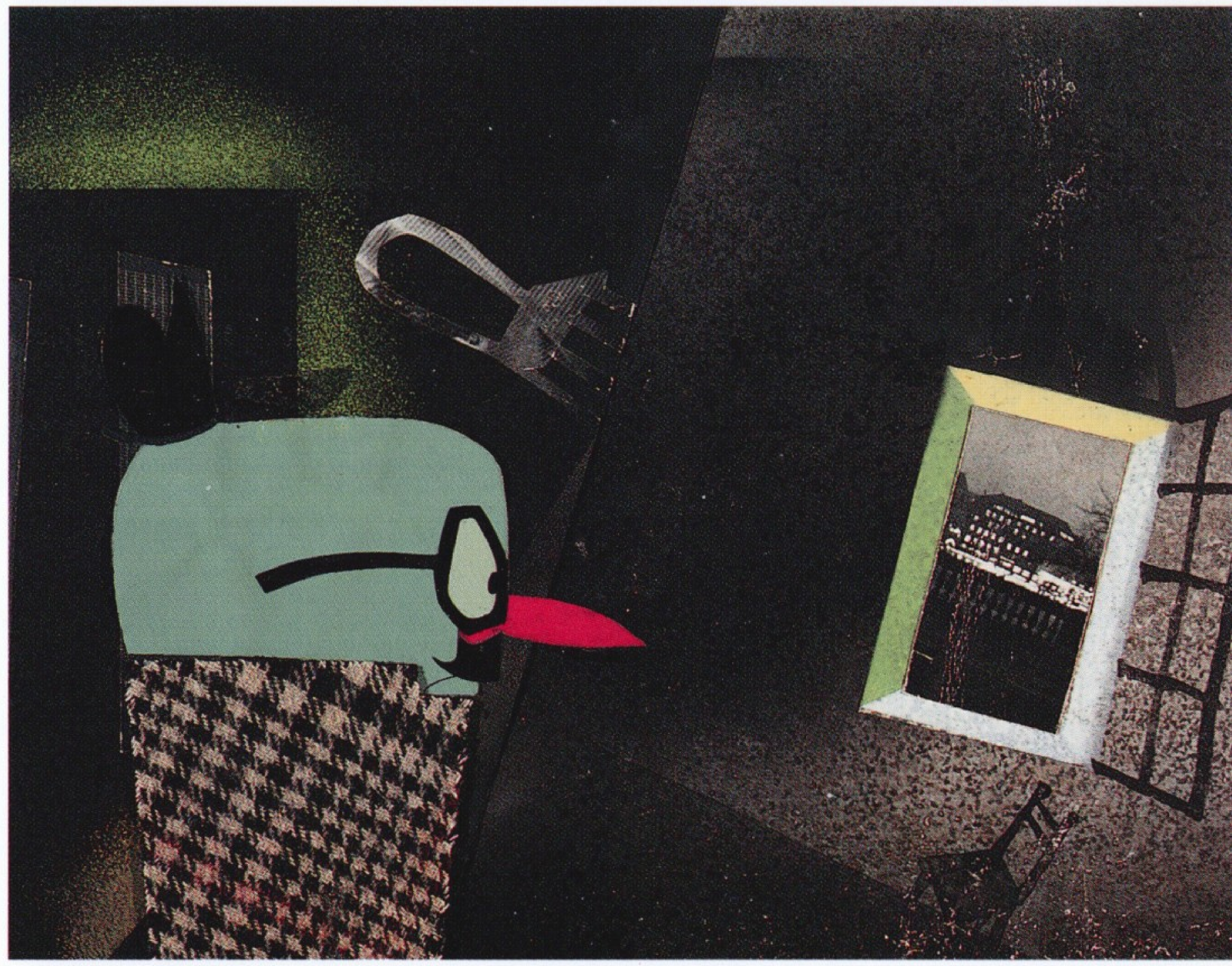


***CONCERTO FOR SUB-MACHINE GUN* (1958)**
Director: Dušan Vukotić



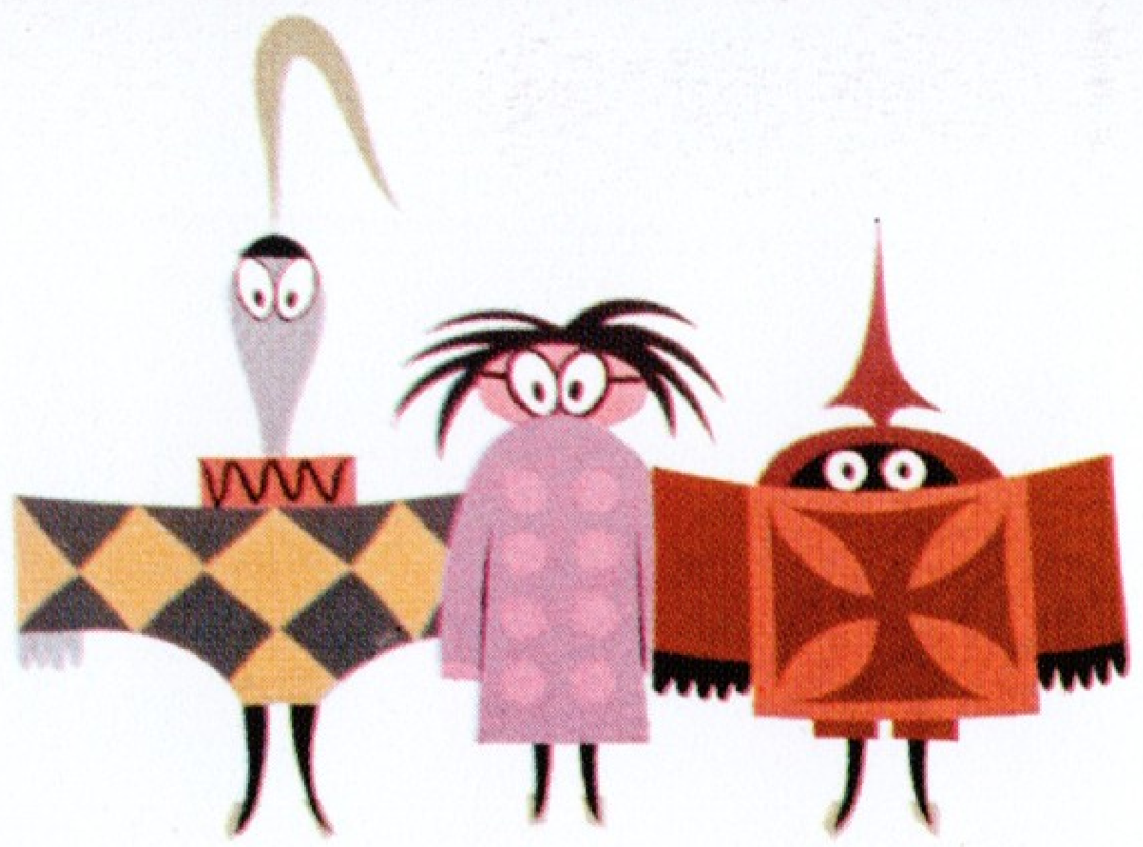
Revenger **(1958)**
Director: Dušan Vukotić
Production cel and background





Top: ***Alone*** **(1958)**
Director: Vatroslav Mimica
Production cel and background

Above: ***The Inspector Returns Home*** **(1959)**
Director: Vatroslav Mimica
Production cel and background



British Design

In the early 1950s, there were less than two hundred people working in the entire British animation industry, and most of them were divided between the country's two biggest studios, Halas & Batchelor and W. M. Larkins Studio, both founded in 1940. Halas & Batchelor, best known for producing Britain's first full-length animated feature, a "Disney style" adaptation of George Orwell's *Animal Farm* (1951), also produced numerous films in the modern style, particularly during the second half of the 1950s. These cartoons, which were mostly commissioned and industrial films, include *To Your Health* (1956, directed and designed by Philip Stapp), *History of the Cinema* (1957, directed by John Halas and designed by Halas and Ted Pettingell), *Follow That Car* (1958, designed by Tom Bailey), *Energy Picture* (1959, directed and designed by Gerald Potterton), and *For Better or Worse* (directed by John Halas and Joy Batchelor, designed by George Him).

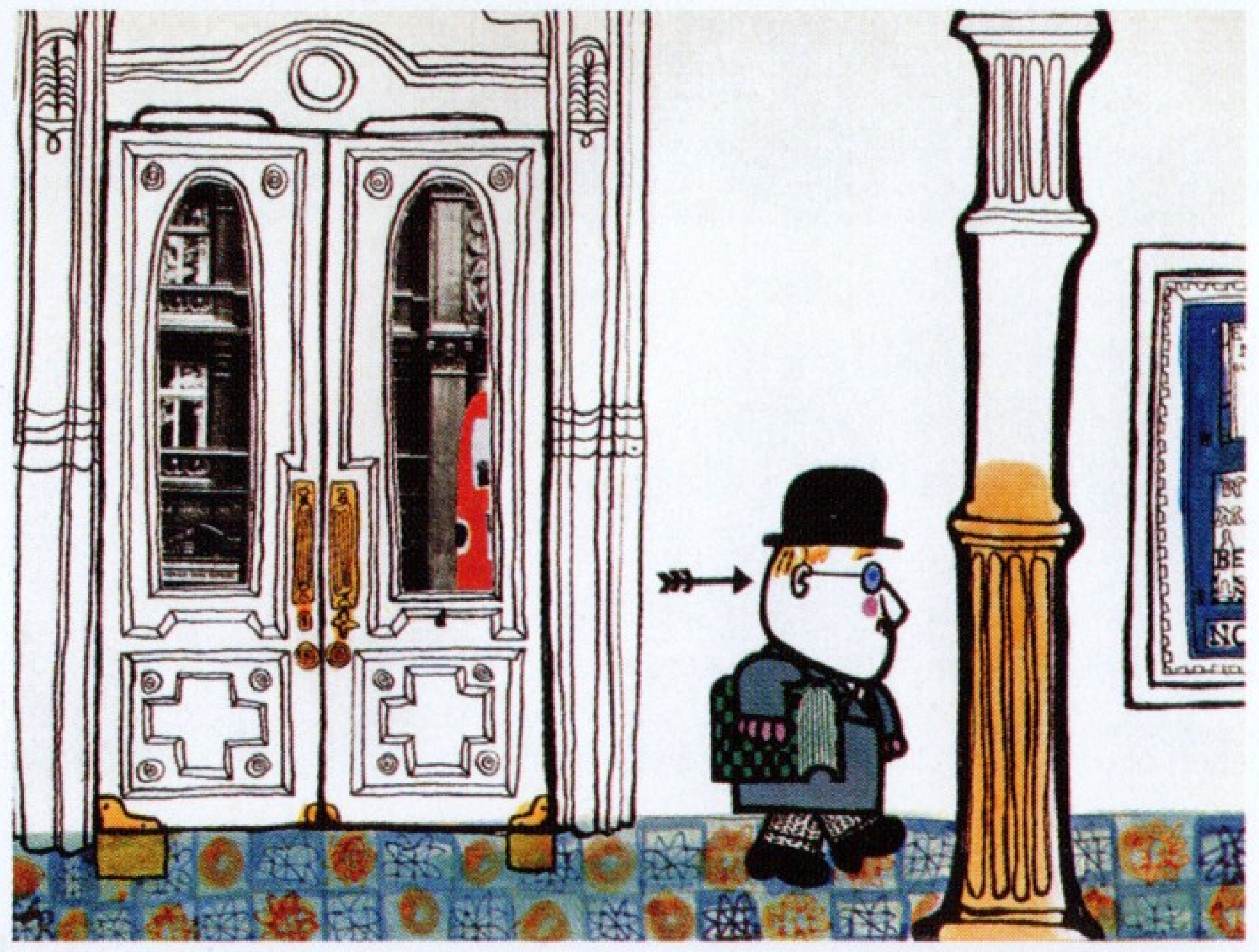
Larkins is one of the great "lost" studios of animation history, and it is tragic that its work isn't better known today. The primary reason for its obscurity is that, unlike Halas & Batchelor, it didn't produce entertainment films, focusing almost entirely on industrial films and commercials for TV and theaters. The studio's most notable figure is Peter Sachs, who directed, designed, and animated at Larkins on projects dating back to the 1940s. *T for Teacher* (1947), an instructional film about tea drinking that Sachs directed and animated, is an incredible exercise in graphic animation and equals (if not exceeds) the level of graphic maturity of UPA and other American studios during the same period. It was not a fluke. Other industrial films by Sachs, such as *Enterprise* (1951, Imperial Chemical Industries) and *River of Steel* (1951, British Iron and Steel Industry), are also far ahead of their time graphically.

There is a spirit of graphic invention in much of the work produced by W. M. Larkins Studio. In the late 1950s, Richard Taylor directed a deftly designed series of theatrical commercials for Barclays Bank branches in Nigeria and Ghana: *Not Cricket: A Musical Fantasy* (with a script by V. S. Naipaul), *Want to Make Your Fortune?* and *Put Una Money for There.* Taylor also directed an inventively designed industrial film, *Earth Is a Battlefield* (1957), for the Iron and Steel Federation.

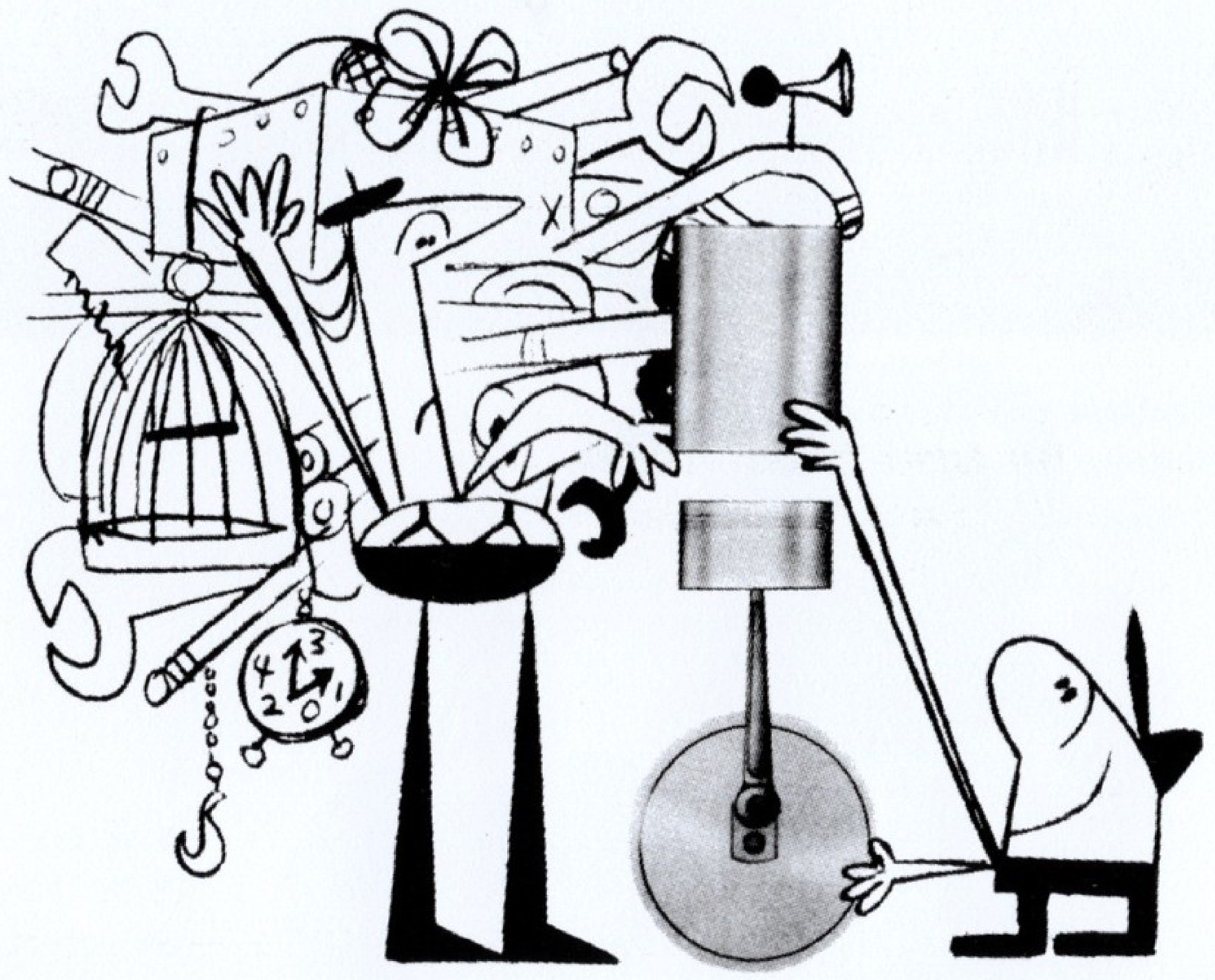
Other commercial studios opened in England in the mid-1950s. Biographic Films was started in 1954 by Larkins staffers Keith Learner and Bob Godfrey and a third partner, Jeff Hale. When Hale departed, two more Larkins designers, Nancy Hanna and Vera Linnecar, joined the company as directors. Another studio, T.V. Cartoons Ltd., was started by George Dunning and John Coates. Dunning had left his Toronto commercial studio, Graphic Associates, in 1955 to join UPA-NY. Soon after arriving in New York, he was sent to London to help set up UPA's new European branch. When that studio folded in 1957, he chose to remain in London where he started T.V. Cartoons Ltd.

A notable artist who worked with Dunning at T.V. Cartoons Ltd. is fellow Canadian Richard Williams. It is hard to imagine Williams, one of animation's most ardent advocates of classical animation principles, as the type of individual who would be positioned at the forefront of modern animation design. But that is exactly how he started his career in the 1950s. Williams's first film, *The Little Island* (1958), is an ambitiously stylized effort that offers little hint of the direction Williams would take in the ensuing years when he produced films with fully articulated Disney-style characters, such as the Oscar-winning *A Christmas Carol* (1973), *Raggedy Ann and Andy* (1977), and *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* (1988), for which he was the animation director.

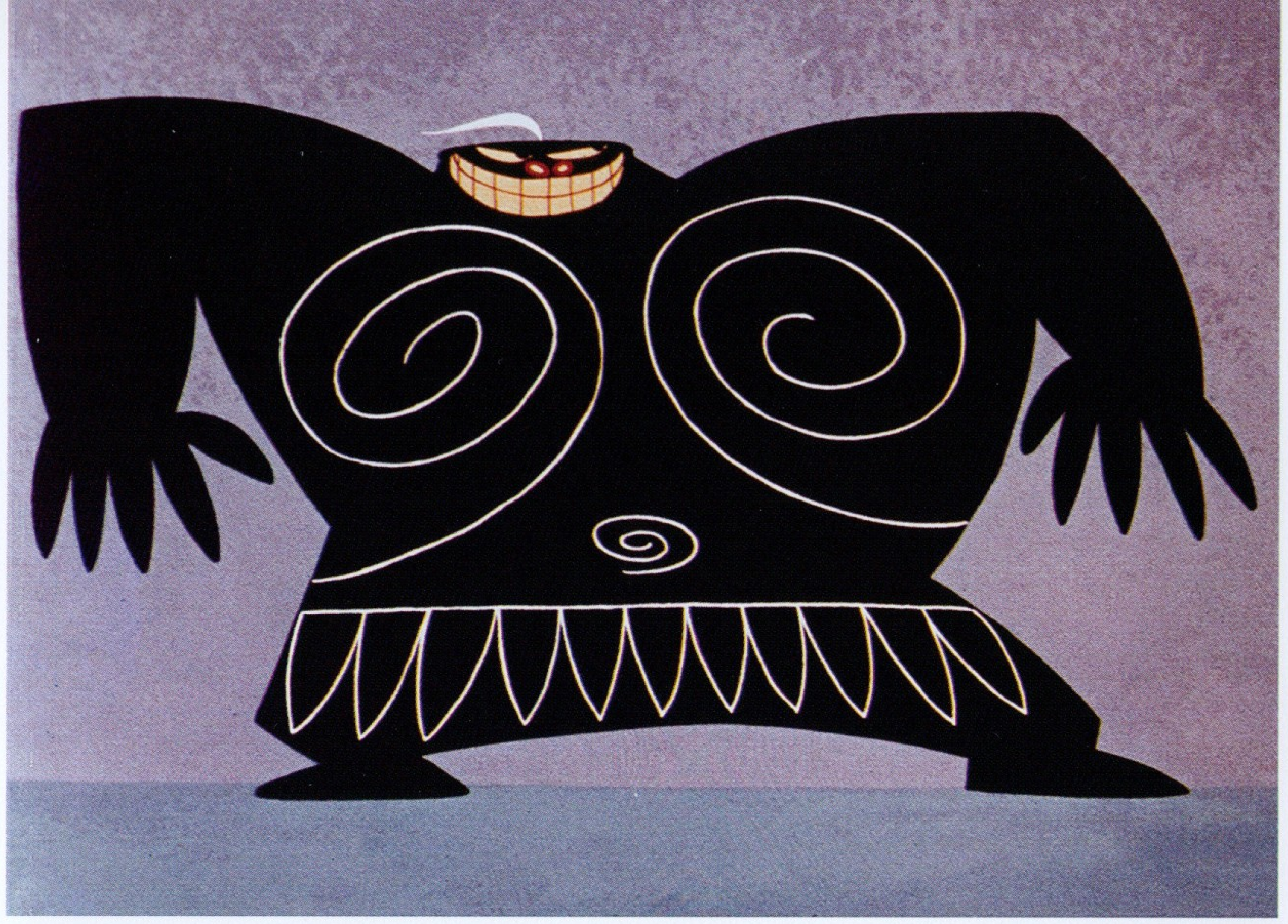
The Little Island, produced independently, but using T.V. Cartoons Ltd.'s staff and equipment, is a dialogueless modern morality play—"three figures representing Truth, Good, Beauty, done in cartoon terms, all marooned on the same symbolic island," according to Williams. In their attempts to convert each other to their idea of the absolute "right way," they ultimately end up destroying one another. *The Little Island* instantly established Williams as a major new talent, garnering him a British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) Award and recognition at the Venice and Cannes film festivals. He followed up the film with direction on an industrial film for Ford, *The Story of the Motor Car Engine* (1959), in which two unabashedly modern characters attempt to build a four-cylinder car engine.

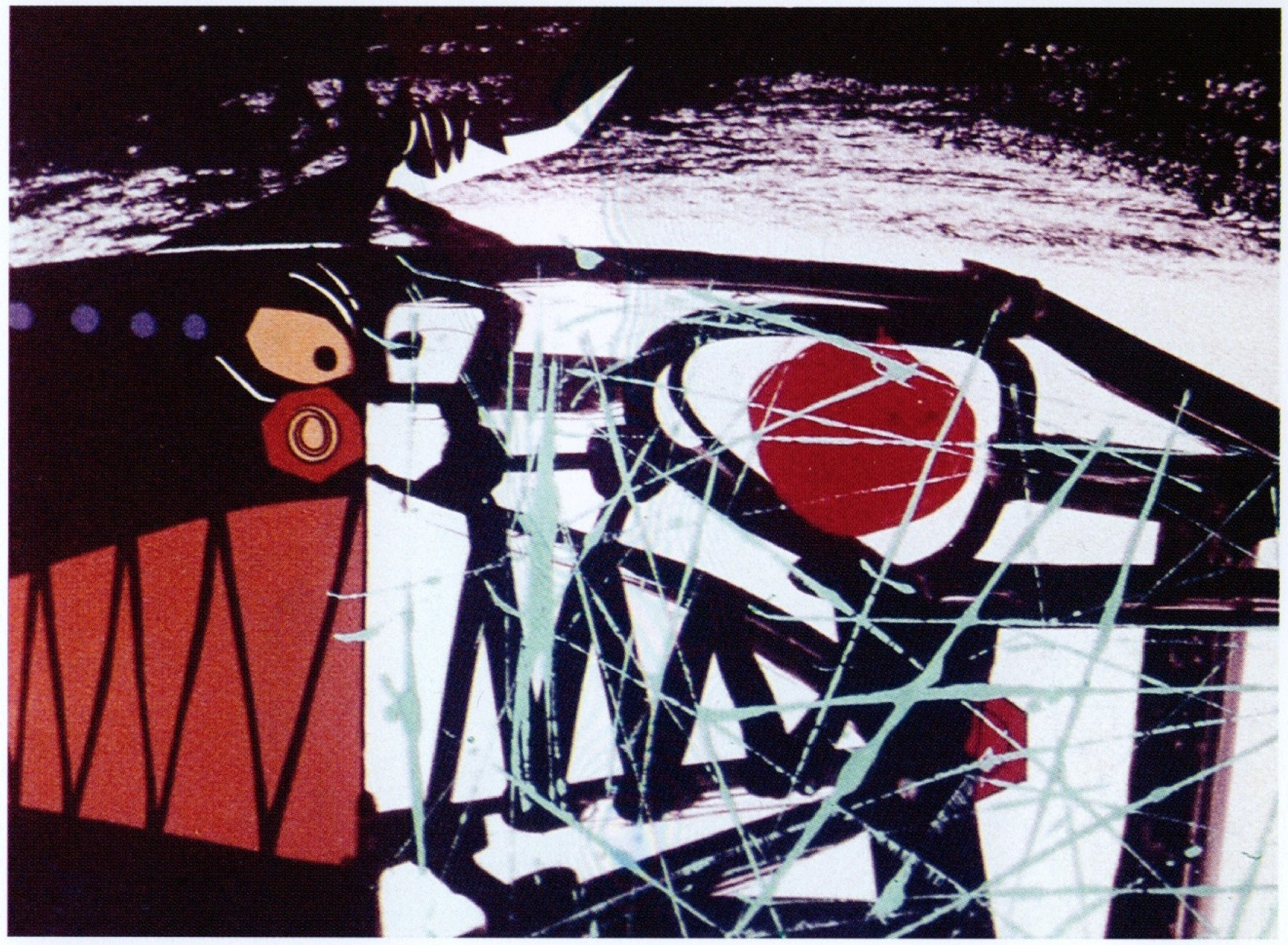


Theatrical commercial for Barclays Bank produced by W. M. Larkins Studio.



***The Story of the Motor Car Engine* (1959)**
Director: Richard Willliams

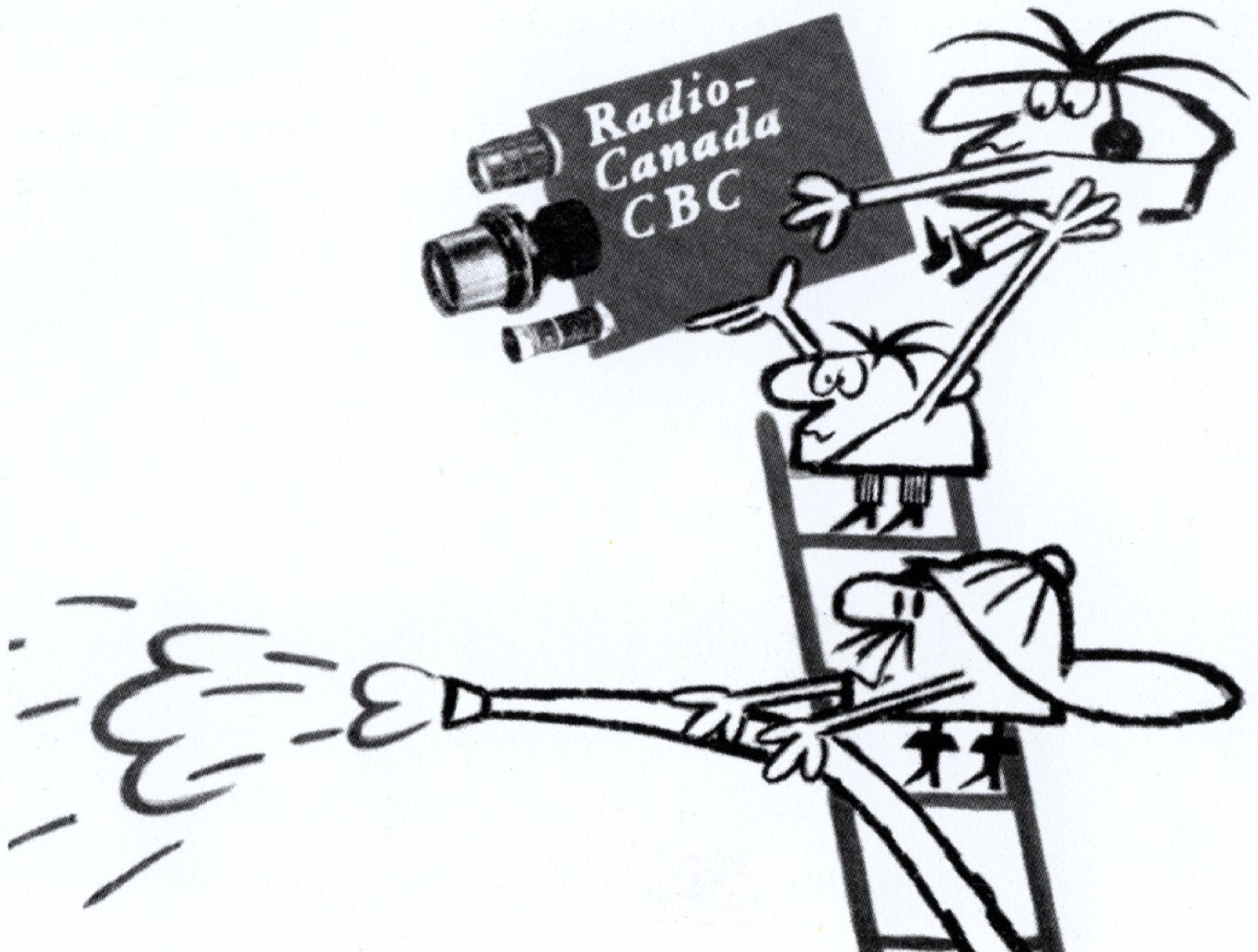




Above and opposite top:
***The Little Island* (1958)**
Director: Richard Williams
Film stills

CANADIAN DESIGN

In Canada, during the 1950s, the government-run National Film Board of Canada (NFB) limited its productions mostly to cut-out animation and experimental film techniques (like those of its most famous director, Norman McLaren). The NFB began using the cel-animation technique more frequently in the early 1950s, and its first major cel-animated cartoon, *The Romance of Transportation in Canada* (1953, directed by Colin Low and designed by Low, Wolf Koenig, and Robert Verrall), was nominated for an Oscar. Other cel-drawn films include *Fish Spoilage Control* (1955, directed and designed by Gerald Potterton), *It's a Crime* (1958, directed by Wolf Koenig, designed by Gerald Potterton), and *My Financial Career* (1962, directed and designed by Gerald Potterton). Beyond the NFB, there were a handful of smaller commercial studios operating in Canada during the 1950s, including Winnipeg-based Phillips-Gutkin Associates and Toronto-based Graphic Associates (started by former NFB staffers Jim MacKay and George Dunning), which both produced television commercials with a strong graphic look. MacKay started his own commercial studio, Film Design, in the late 1950s, after Dunning moved to the United States.



A commercial for CBC Radio directed by Gerald Potterton at the National Film Board of Canada.

CONCLUSION

Walk into an animation studio today and it may seem like you've stepped back in a time machine. It's not uncommon to find artists surrounded by stacks of Ed Benedict photocopies, with Mary Blair art plastered around their cubicles and bootleg videotapes of UPA and Deitch-era Terrytoons scattered around the floor. The work of midcentury animation designers hasn't been forgotten; much to the contrary, it is a vital part of today's animation industry, inspiring and instructing a whole new generation of artists.

It wasn't always like this though.

The design movement documented in this book had fizzled out in the United States by the early 1960s. Theatrical shorts were all but a dead art form, and grinding production schedules and penny-pinching budgets of TV animation rarely allowed for luxuries such as design. Most of the designers from the 1950s continued working in animation at television studios like Hanna-Barbera, Format Films, and Jay Ward Productions. They tried to create good work, but quality design was low on the priority list of most television producers.

Moreover, Modernist principles were on the decline throughout the art world in the early 1960s. A new era of pop art, conceptual art, and stylistic eclecticism had taken over. The new look of animation was typified in the animated feature *Yellow Submarine* (1968), designed by illustrator Heinz Edelmann. This was a type of design that celebrated the lumpy and the wobbly, faithfully mirroring trends in 1960s art and illustration in general. The 1970s would hardly be any better.

TIDES OF CHANGE

As a child growing up in Argentina, Oscar Grillo had been greatly impressed by John Hubley's *Rooty Toot Toot*, Saul Steinberg's magazine cartoons, and a Cubist painting he'd seen by Picasso entitled *L'Aubade*. In his teens, he was working at an animation studio in Argentina when he stumbled across a reel of 1950s TV commercials produced by New York studio Robert Lawrence Productions. Grillo scrutinized the commercials frame-by-frame to understand how the films were created. When Grillo moved to Europe in 1969, though, he recalls that it was impossible to create animation in the Modernist manner "thanks to *Yellow Submarine* and Robert Crumb comics." It wasn't until 1979 that Grillo found the opportunity to direct a high-profile project in a style that he wanted. The cartoon was a music video for Linda McCartney's song "Seaside Woman":

> *Paul and Linda [McCartney] suggested I do it in a Disneyesque way. I wasn't terribly interested, so I proposed something different. Only I wasn't sure what it would be. I had seen at the time some amazing Felix the Cat comic strips from the 1920s and was crazy about the way they worked in clear spaces, organizing compositions of pure Art Deco elegance. I felt that that was the style I wanted to use, but updating it by making it in very expressionistic color. I used a palette similar to that of Gauguin in my designs. Perhaps I was remembering the powerful effect that* Rooty Toot Toot *had on me as a young viewer.*

The film was a sensation at the time, largely because it was so rare in the 1970s to see an animated film where thoughtful consideration had been afforded to the design, color, and animation, and how these elements comprised the greater whole. One artist who was inspired by the film enough to send Grillo a fan letter was Darrell Van Citters, a young director at Disney who was attempting to bring design back into the Hollywood animation industry. Van Citters remembers the dreary circumstances in the early 1980s: "American animation was moribund at this point and design never entered the equation. The studios at that point couldn't even adequately execute the animation portion of their output, let alone institute design into it." Within this atmosphere, Van Citters sensed an opportunity to try something new.

In 1980, Van Citters was given the chance to direct a project at Disney called *Fun with Mr. Future*. The project, he explains, "was originally conceived as animated comedy relief on four one-hour Disney Sunday night shows to promote the upcoming opening of Epcot. When the shows were cancelled, we wanted to save the animation so we reconceived the animation to fit into a short." The short film attempted a modern style with background design by Brian McEntee, color styling by Tia Kratter, and character design by Ed Gombert and Michael Giaimo.

Around the studio, Van Citters remembers the "inevitable comparison to Ward Kimball" and how the project was dismissed by most of management. "We encountered *lots* of

***Giddyap* (1950, UPA)**
Director: Art Babbitt
Background painting
by unknown artist

resistance at the studio. The old guard couldn't understand what we saw in this cartoon-design approach and were quite derisive in their comments about it." The work of Grillo and Van Citters proved that there was an alternative to the squiggles and lumps of 1960s and 1970s design, but the impact of these films on the industry was nominal, and the 1980s wouldn't turn out to be the postmodern resurgence of animation design. There was the occasional glimpse of designed animation, as in the *Family Dog* (1987) special directed by Brad Bird for an episode of Steven Spielberg's *Amazing Stories* television series and the work of British commercial studios like Oscar Grillo and Ted Rockley's Klactoveesedstene Animation and Eric Goldberg's Pizzazz Pictures. But most artists remained unaware of or indifferent to animation design. Somebody needed to properly reintroduce this work to the new generation of animation artists.

Crash Course in Design

Michael Giaimo, a young Disney artist who had worked as a designer and story artist on Van Citters's *Fun with Mr. Future*, would help lay the foundation for a resurgence in designed animation when he taught character design, caricature, and preproduction design at California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) between 1985 and 1992. In the late 1970s, when Giaimo attended CalArts as a student, he had been introduced to the importance of design by instructor Bill Moore. "Bill raised the bar for us, setting a standard of what good design is, and how it could apply to our medium," Giaimo says. "He was incredibly inspiring and it was his principles that I carried with me when I began to teach the next generation of character animation designers." (Moore is an unsung figure who also taught many of the designers in this book during the 1940s and 1950s at Chouinard Art Institute—the school that eventually became CalArts.)

Giaimo's former students at CalArts comprise a virtual who's who of today's animation design scene. His students included Dave Wasson (creator, *Time Squad*), Dave Cutler (art director, *Home on the Range*), Craig Kellman (character designer, *Samurai Jack*; art director, *The Powerpuff Girls*), Craig McCracken (creator, *The Powerpuff Girls* and *Foster's Home for Imaginary Friends*), and Genndy Tartakovsky (creator, *Dexter's Laboratory* and *Samurai Jack*). Kellman recalls that Giaimo was "very influential in my focus on graphic, stylized animation design. He exposed us to the work of midcentury animation design masters like Ed Benedict, Mary Blair, T. Hee, and Tom Oreb, as he clearly had a strong affinity for the work of that period."

Giaimo would go on to art direct the first modern-day stylized Disney feature, *Pocahontas* (1995), and recently has been art directing the Cartoon Network series *Hi Hi Puffy Ami Yumi* (produced with his old Disney colleague, Darrell Van Citters, at Van Citters's studio, Renegade Animation).

Another major group of new designers was born thanks to the efforts of 1950s-era designer Maurice Noble. In 1993, Noble had come out of retirement to work once again with director Chuck Jones on a series of theatrical shorts. When they began looking for layout artists, Noble decided that instead of hiring established industry talent, he would train young artists from scratch in his methods of layout design. For his great experiment, he hand-picked a group of students at CalArts comprised of Tod Polson, Don Hall, Lawrence Marvit, Scott Morse, and Ricardo Barahona. "Our training went way beyond the studio," recalls Polson:

> *We would take museum trips guided by Maurice, hang out in Maurice's studio and assist him on his own freelance projects. . . . He encouraged our study of the art of other cultures, thinking it was a great way to break out of the stuff that was happening in animation design at the time. That is what Maurice's real goal was with training us; Maurice was disgusted by the type of design that was seen in most films and TV in the 1980s and early 1990s. He knew we all could do something better.*

Shortly afterward, when Noble started working at the short-lived Turner Feature Animation, he trained more artists, including Ricky Nierva, Mike Stern, and Lou Romano. The artists trained by him are nowadays affectionately known as the Noble Boys (with the occasional Noble Girl as well). Other Noble-trained animation designers during the 1990s include Jorge Gutierrez, Cynthia Ignacio, and John Korellis. At the time of Noble's death in 2001, he had been working on a short film project with Tod Polson. That film, *The Pumpkin of Nyefar*, was completed and released in 2004, with Polson and Mark Oftedal sharing directorial duties. A series of additional "Noble Tales," combining elegant animation design with folktales from around the world, is currently in development.

The Silver Age of Animation Design

With a new generation of animation artists versed in the finer points of design, the postmodern renaissance in animation design began in earnest during the mid-1990s, with shows like Cartoon Network's *Dexter's Laboratory* (1996) and *The Powerpuff Girls* (1998). The trend toward design has gone unabated since, and today there are shows like *Samurai Jack* (2001), *Mr. Bean: The Animated Series* (2002), *My Life As a Teenage Robot* (2003), *Foster's Home for Imaginary Friends* (2004), and *Hi Hi Puffy AmiYumi* (2004); film sequences like *Tomcats* (2001), *Catch Me If You Can* (2002), and *Down with Love* (2003); and commercials and short films by countless studios in the United States and abroad.

Animated features have also felt the effects of design. One need only look at recent Disney films like *The Emperor's New Groove* (2001) and *Home on the Range* (2004). An even bigger surprise is the use of the 1950s design aesthetic in computer-animated films. Witness the development art for recent Pixar films: the work of Ricky Nierva and Geefwee Boedoe on *Monsters, Inc.* (2001) or Teddy Newton and Lou Romano's work for *The Incredibles* (2004). More surprisingly, the notoriously literalist DreamWorks animation chief, Jeffrey Katzenberg, chose a stylized route for his film *Madagascar* (2005). The decision surprised even the film's lead character designer, Craig Kellman, who had expected that his extremely stylized conceptual sketches would be "promptly tossed into the trash" rather than guiding the look of the entire film. Kellman believes that there is rich potential for the use of design in computer-generated (CG) animation:

> *Obviously, you can't compete with traditional, 2-D animation when it comes to achieving a truly "flat" look. (That's why hand-drawn films should always exist.) But if we think of these CG films as three-dimensional cartoons with character designs that are only as limited as sculpture is, it can really open up the possibilities. Imagine cartoon versions of Picasso's Cubist sculpture or Henry Moore's stylized sculpture, or some really fun vinyl toy come to life, or just really slick versions of Rankin-Bass's stop-motion shows. . . . For years, CG animated films have been created purely in "default" mode, letting the technology dictate design based on its comfort level. But with movies like* The Incredibles *and* Madagascar *being made, the tide of CG animation is turning away from the dull and literal.*

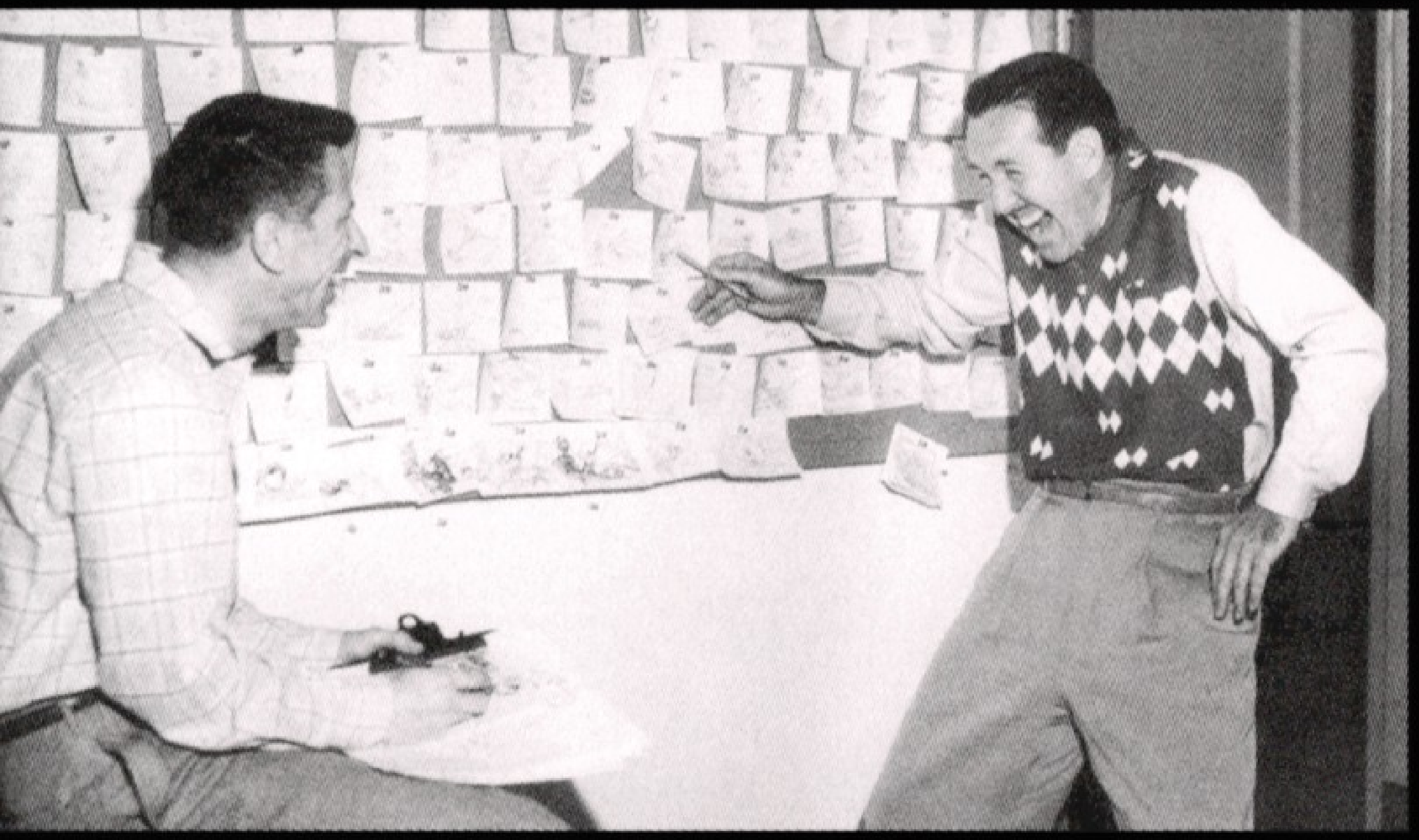
Besides the artists already mentioned, there are numerous other notable designers working in today's industry; to name a few: Don Shank, Dan Krall, Shakeh Haghnazarian, Lynne Naylor, Hans Bacher, Shane Glines, Joseph Holt, Gabe Swarr, Matt Cruickshank, Joel Trussell, Stephanie Choi, Chris Harding, Roque Ballesteros, Andy Bialk, and Paul Rudish. There are also animation artists like Tim Biskup and Miles Thompson, who have adapted their distinctive sense of style into the fine art world, while Frank Espinosa has transferred the look to comic books with his latest project, *Rocketo*. The influence has extended beyond the boundaries of animation, and today, book and magazine illustrators like Lane Smith, Kirsten Ulve, and David Sheldon frequently cite UPA, Blair, Noble, Earle, and Benedict among their influences.

With so much design in today's animation industry, there are inevitably many second-tier imitators who apply the lessons of 1950s animation design in a clumsy, haphazard manner. It brings to mind a complaint that Bill Hurtz once made about artists in the 1950s who tried to be contemporary by adding straight lines to all their designs. The results, Hurtz lamented, were "these characters with square noses, as if that were a design statement. It wasn't; it was the story of a man who for some reason has the end of a two-by-four for a nose. That's an example of the misapplication of 'design,' the imposition of it where it isn't organic."

Animation also still struggles to marry form and content as successfully as artists did before. There are few John Hubleys and Ward Kimballs on the contemporary animation scene, the type of artist who understands that design is only a means to an end and cannot carry a film on its own. Darrell Van Citters doesn't hesitate to proclaim that "animation design is in a Silver Age right now," but he also tempers it, adding, "Content? Not so much a Silver Age."

As the animated art form evolves and begins to fulfill its potential as a graphic medium, the lessons of the 1950s animation design pioneers continue to resonate as strongly as ever. These artists proved that animation need not conform to one style or look, that cartoons could be used to express any number of ideas and themes, and that the art form's richness and diversity is limited only by the artist's imagination.

YEARBOOK


Ed Benedict (left) and Michael Lah

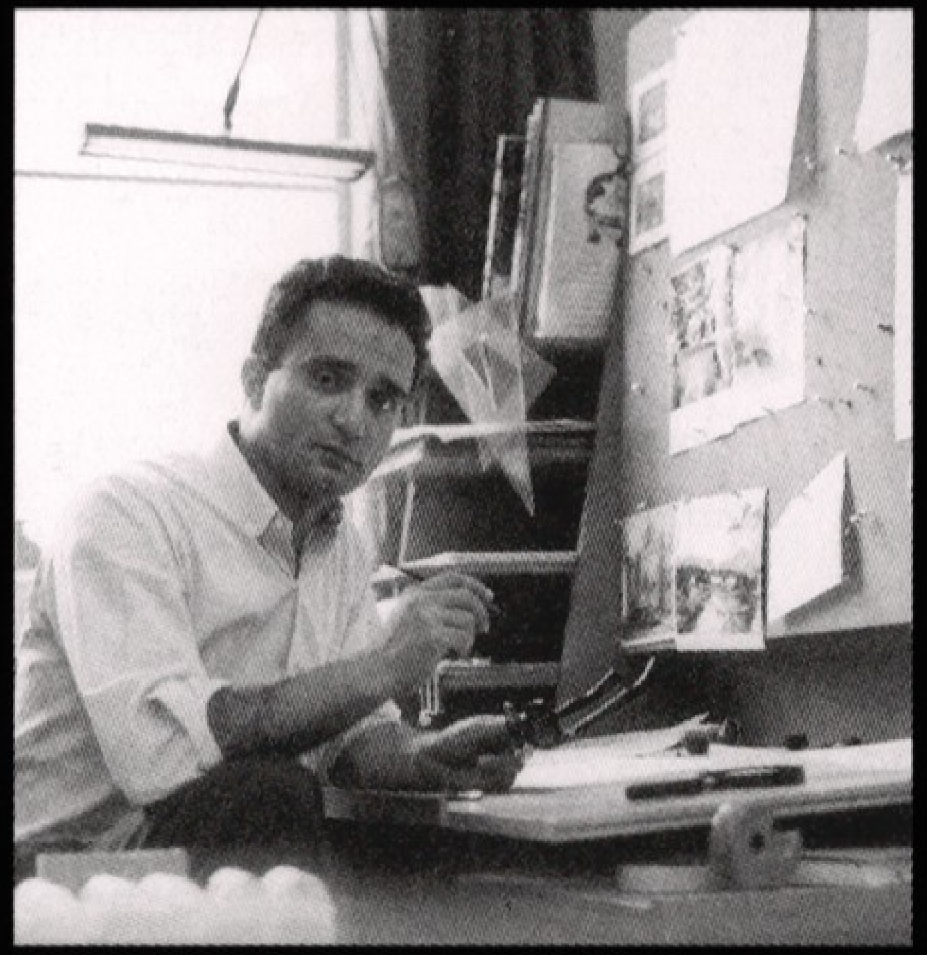
Dolores Cannata

Bobe Cannon

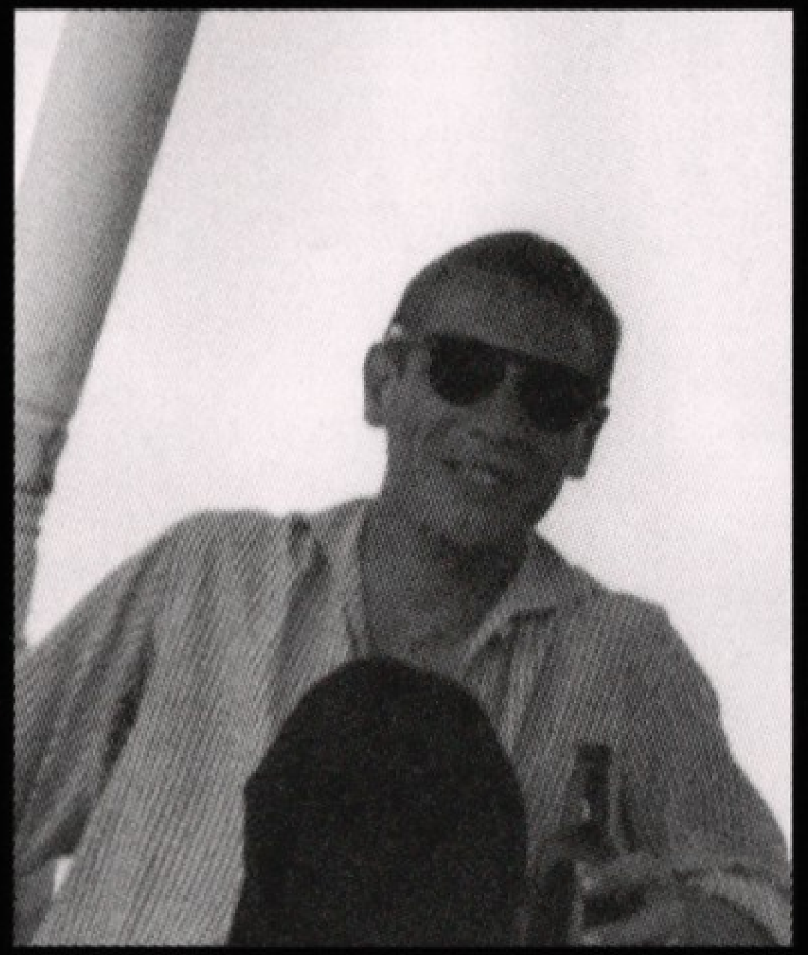
Sam Clayberger (left) and Roy Morita

Fred Crippen (center)

Len Glasser

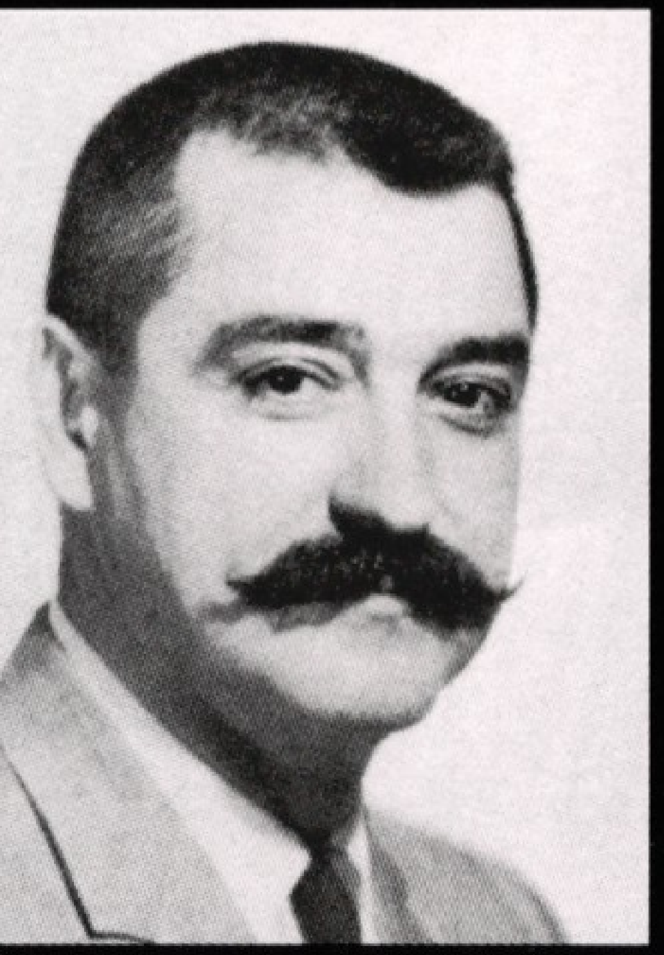

Victor Haboush

Gene Hazelton


Harry Hess

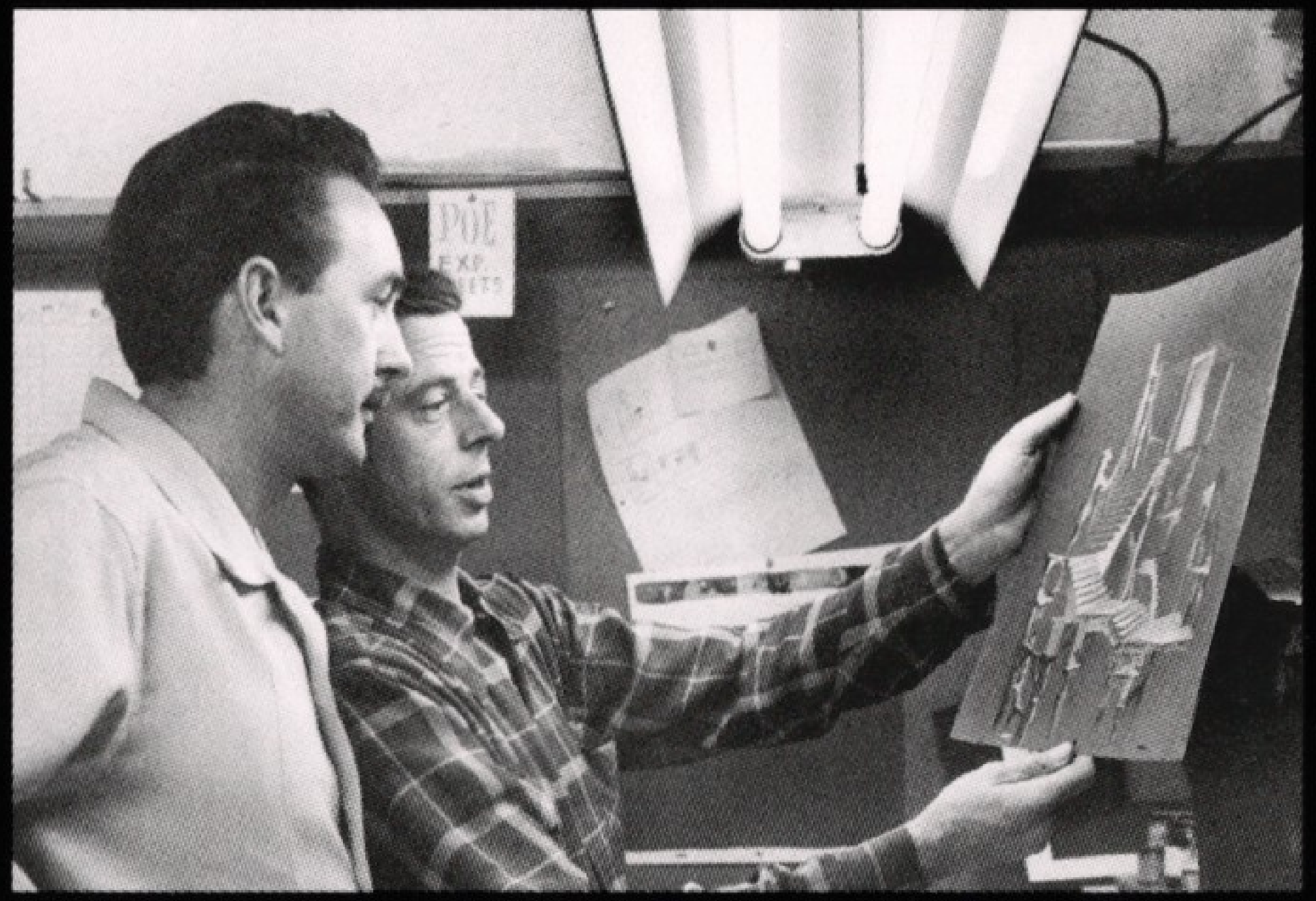
John Hubley

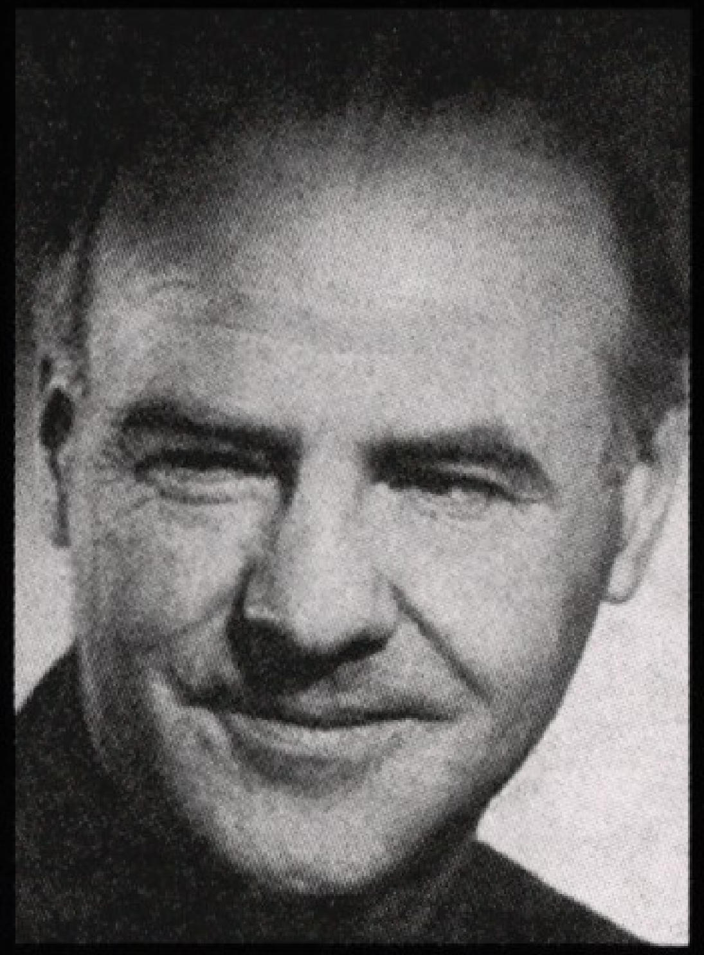
Gregorio Prestopino (left), and John and Faith Hubley

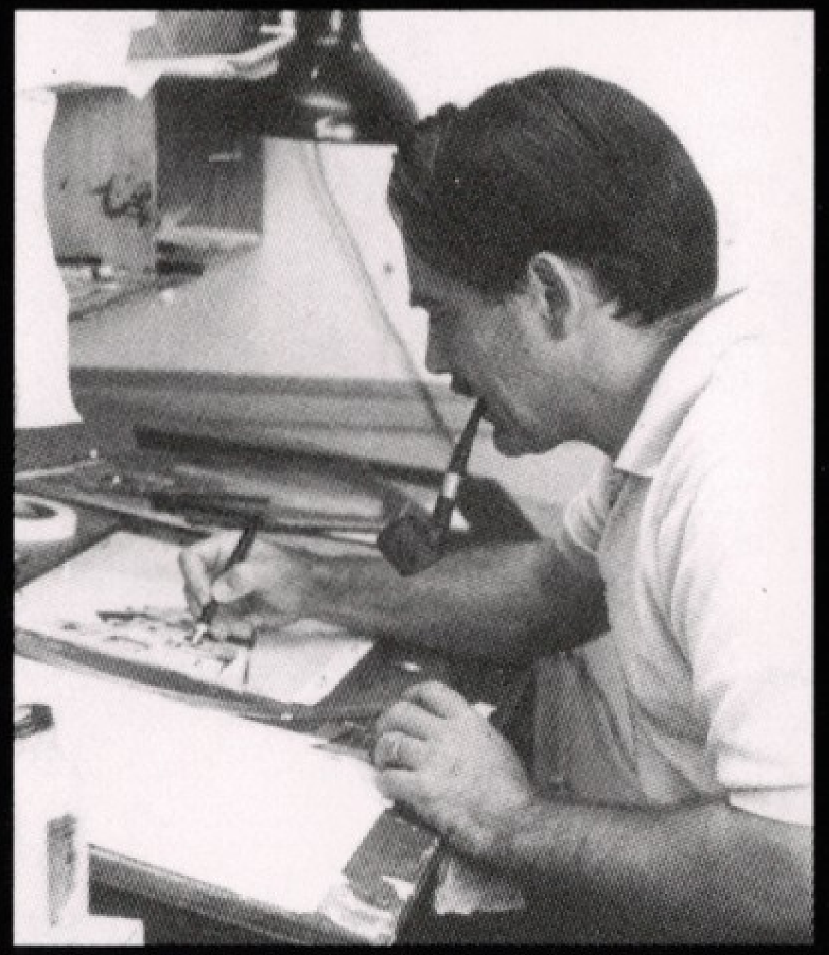

Bill Melendez

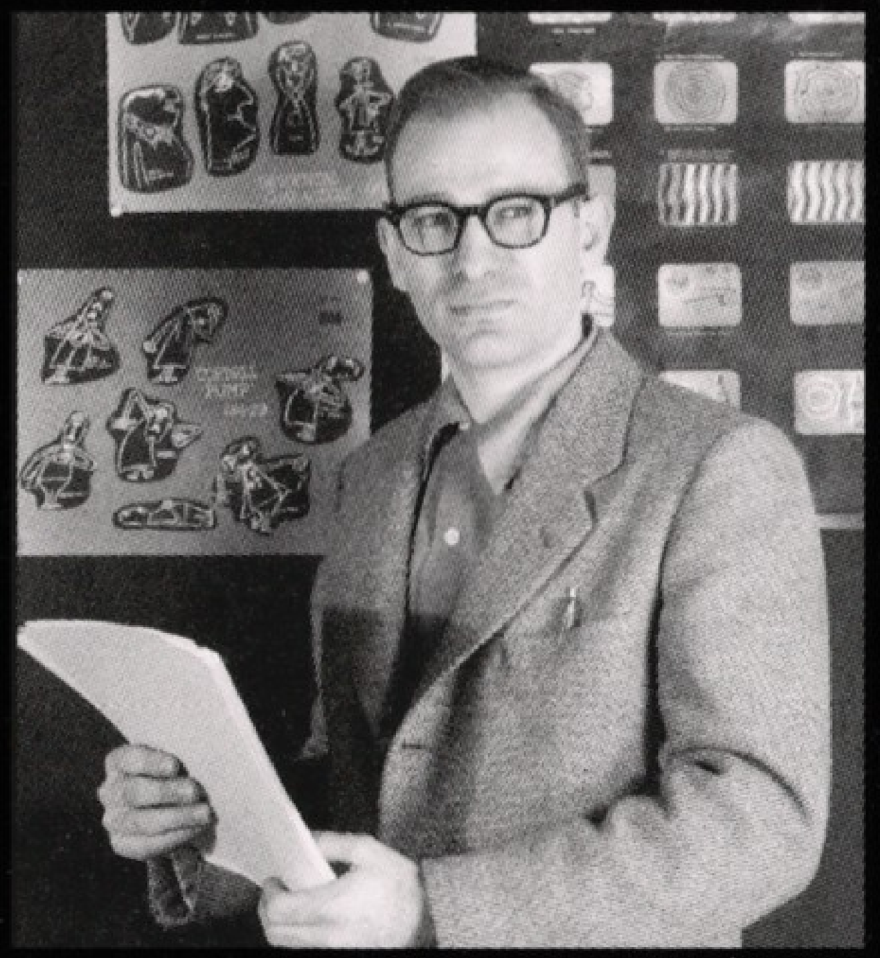
Maurice Noble

Tom Oreb


Steve Bosustow (left) and Ted Parmelee

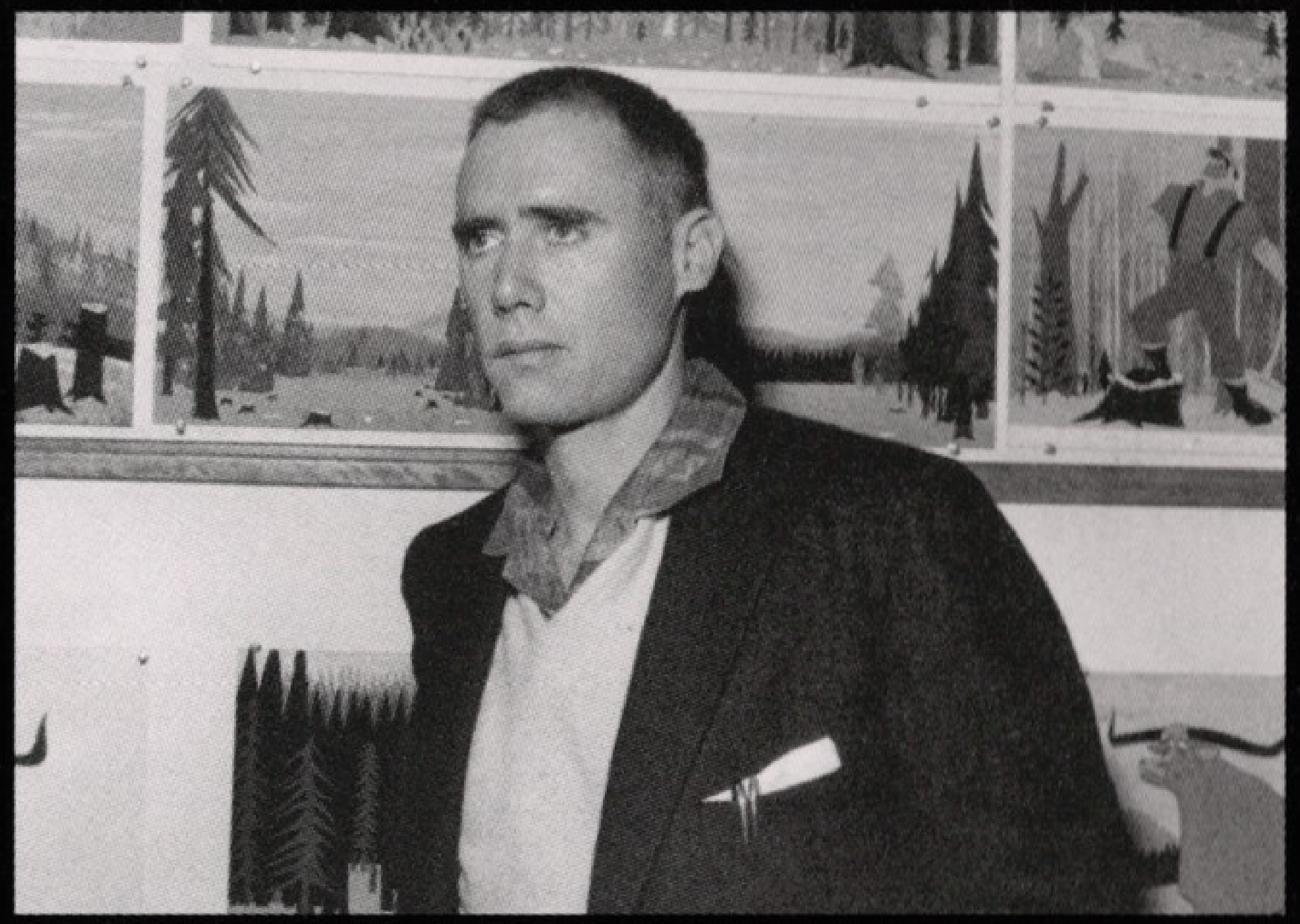

Ray Patin


Walt Peregoy



Gene Deitch

Bob Dranko (left) and Bill Hurtz



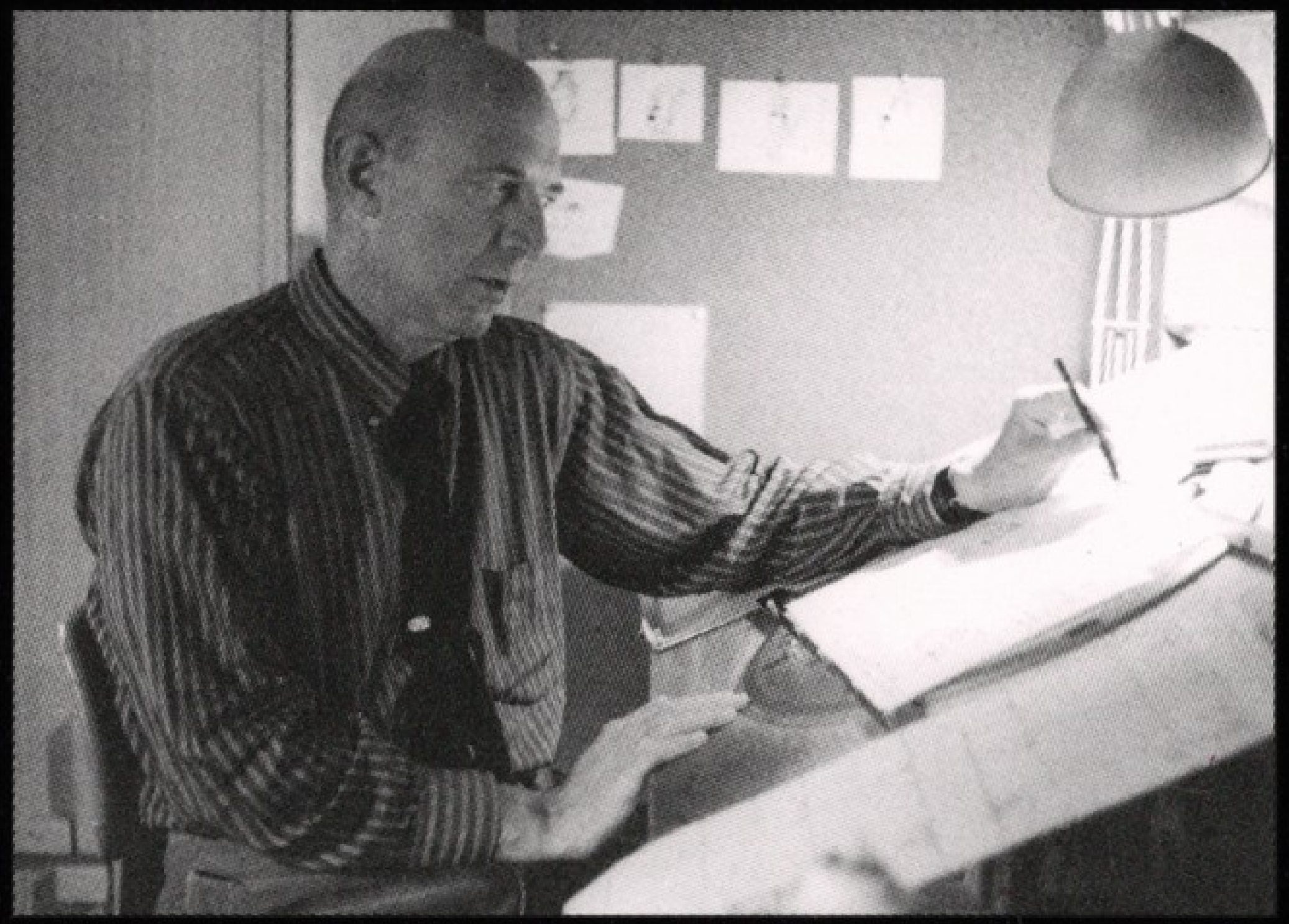
Eyvind Earle

Jules Engel

Ray Favata (left) and Jules Feiffer

Mordi Gerstein

Larry Herndon (left) and Roddy Keitz



Lew Keller

Paul Kim (left) and Lew Gifford

Al Kouzel

Abe Liss

Bob McIntosh

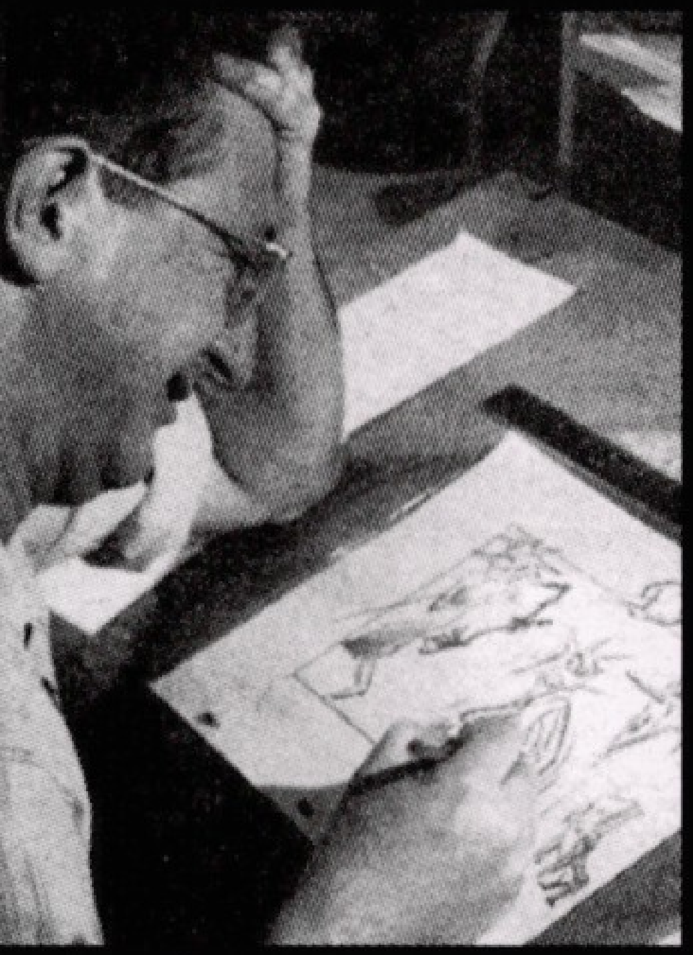
Charleen Peterson

Ernest Pintoff

Hawley Pratt (standing) and Friz Freleng

Cliff Roberts

Rod Scribner

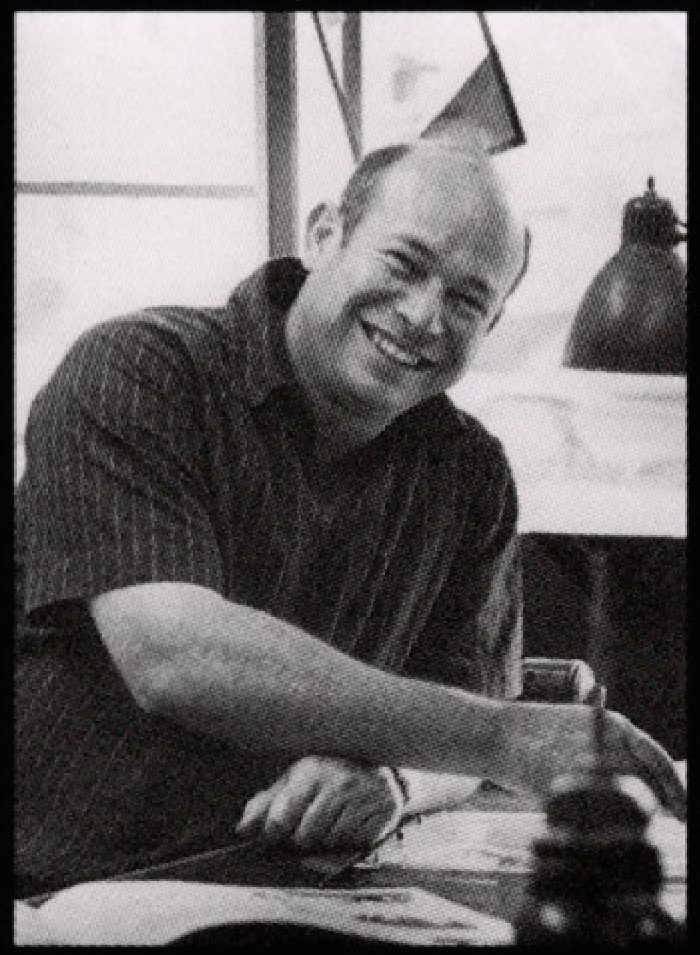


Zach Schwartz

Sterling Sturtevant (left) and Pete Burness

Jim Tyer

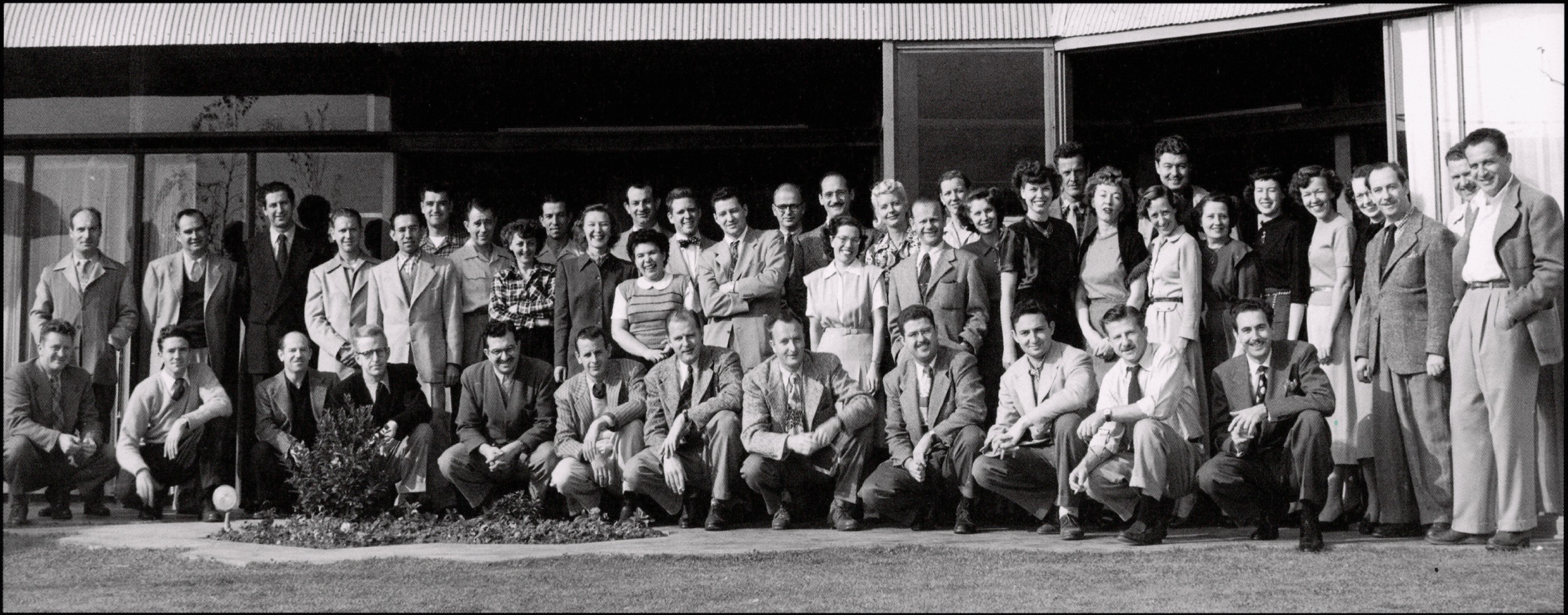
Dušan Vukotić (left)



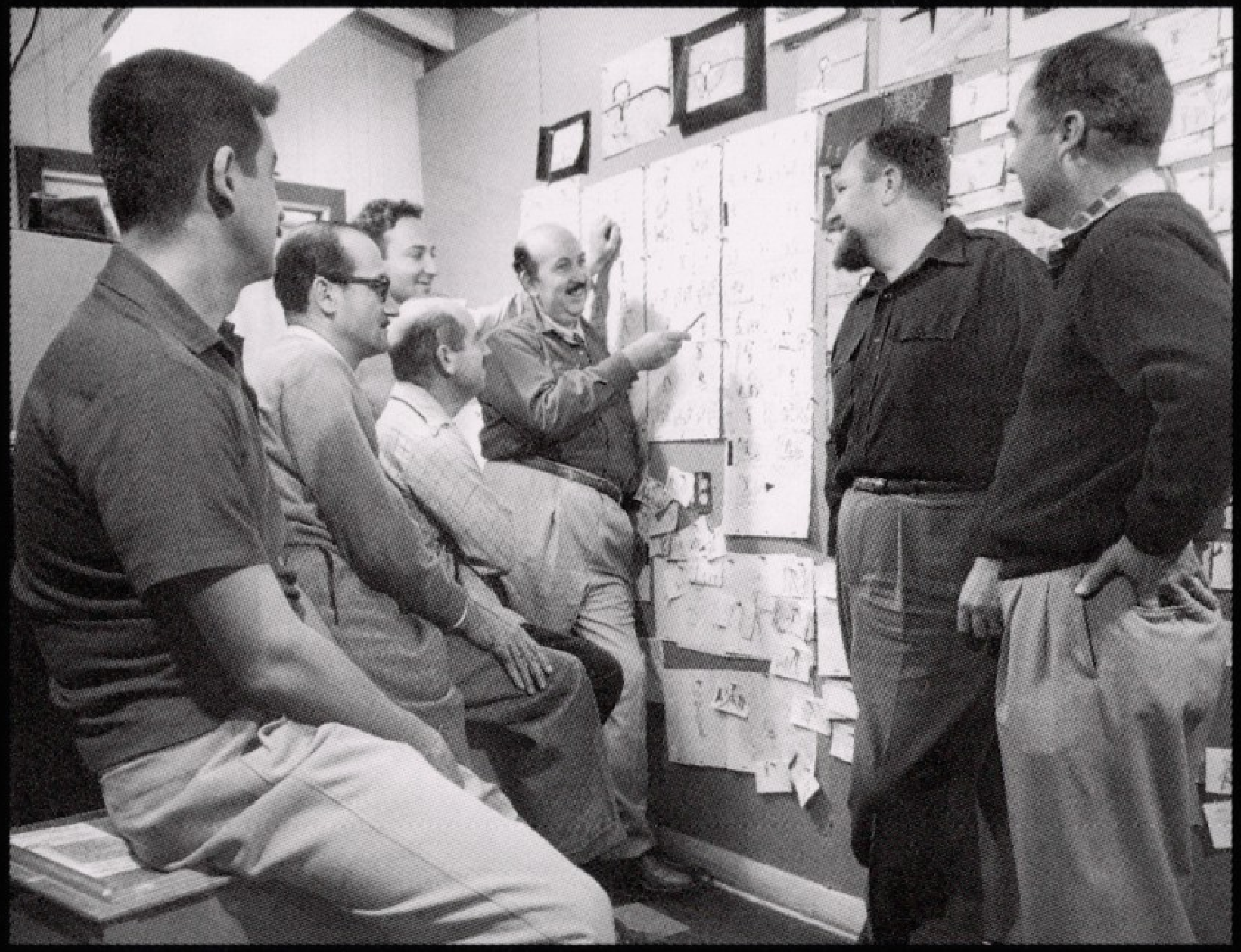
David Weidman

Richard Williams

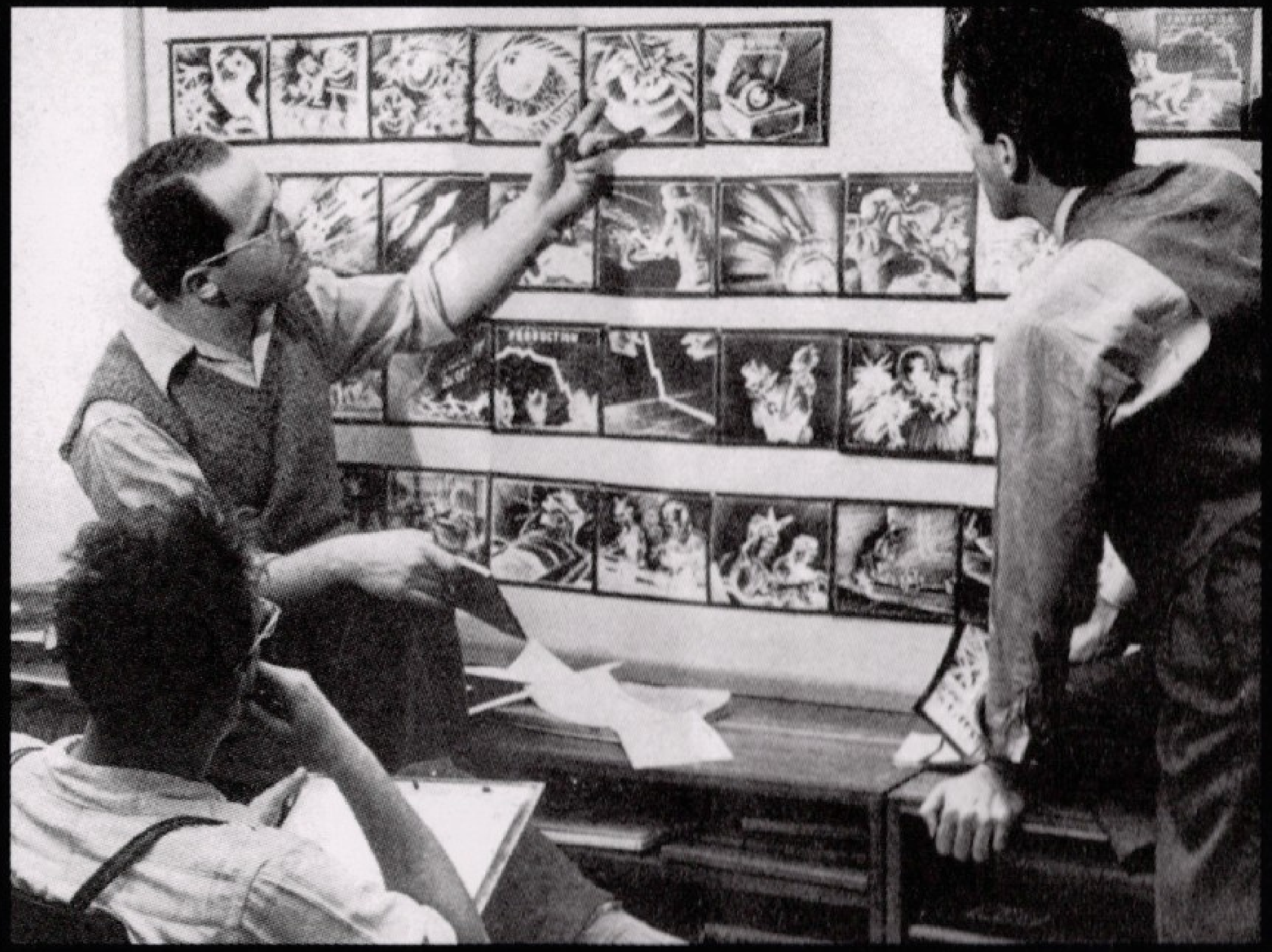
Adrian Woolery



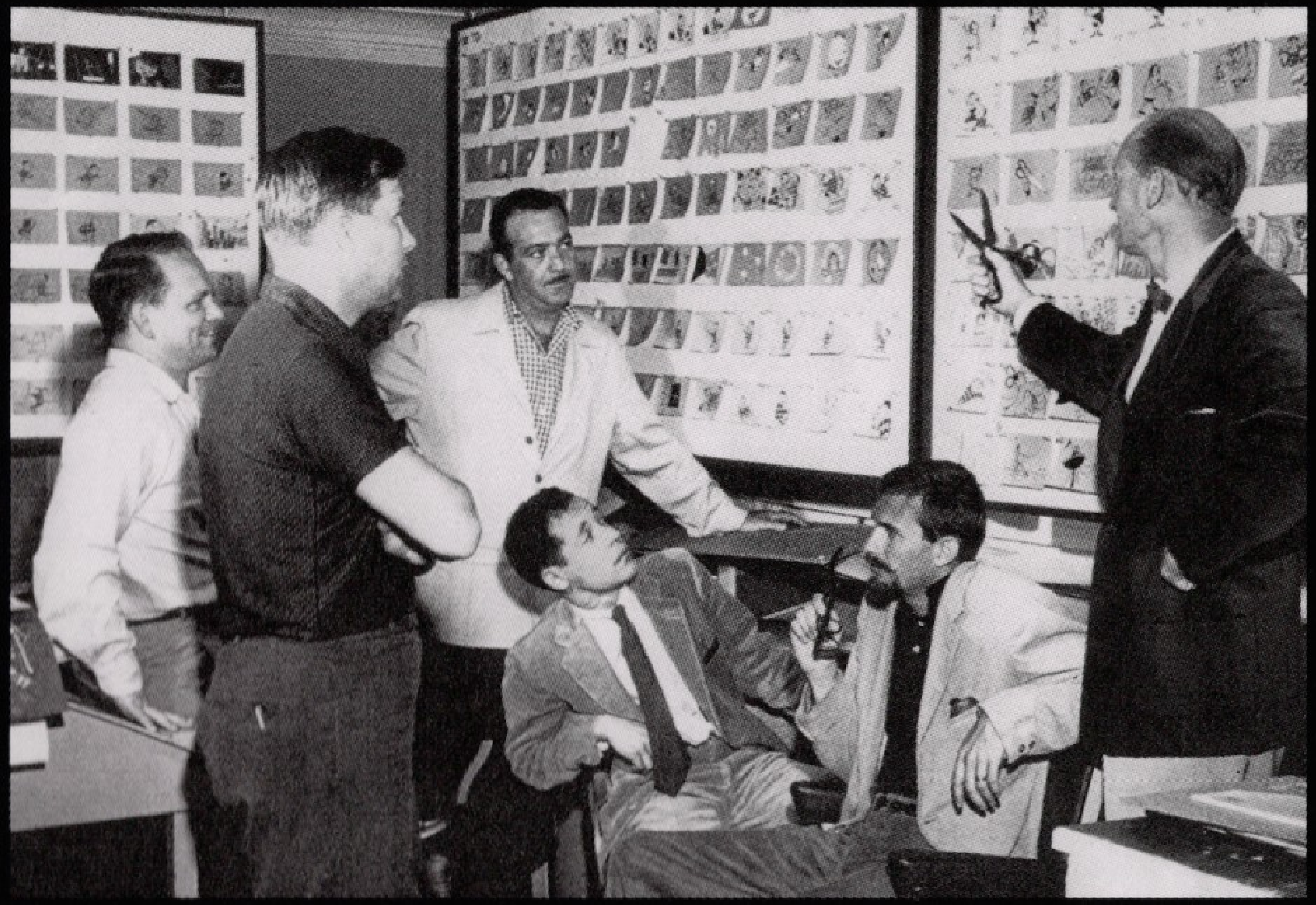
The UPA crew c. 1950. Standing, left to right: Maurice Fagin, Bobe Cannon, unknown, Wally Bullock, Rudy Larriva, Bill Melendez, Jack Eckes, unknown, unknown, Mary Cain, unknown woman, Ed Gershman, Bill Hurtz, John Hubley, Phil Eastman, Jules Engel, rest of women unknown, Tolly Crusanoff, Roger Daley, Pete Burness, Paul Smith, unknown, unknown. Kneeling: Jack Schnerk, Bob Givens, Frank Smith, Spencer Peel, Herb Klynn, Willis Pyle, Adrian Woolery, Pat Matthews, Bill Scott, Alan Zaslove, Art Babbitt, Stephen Bosustow.



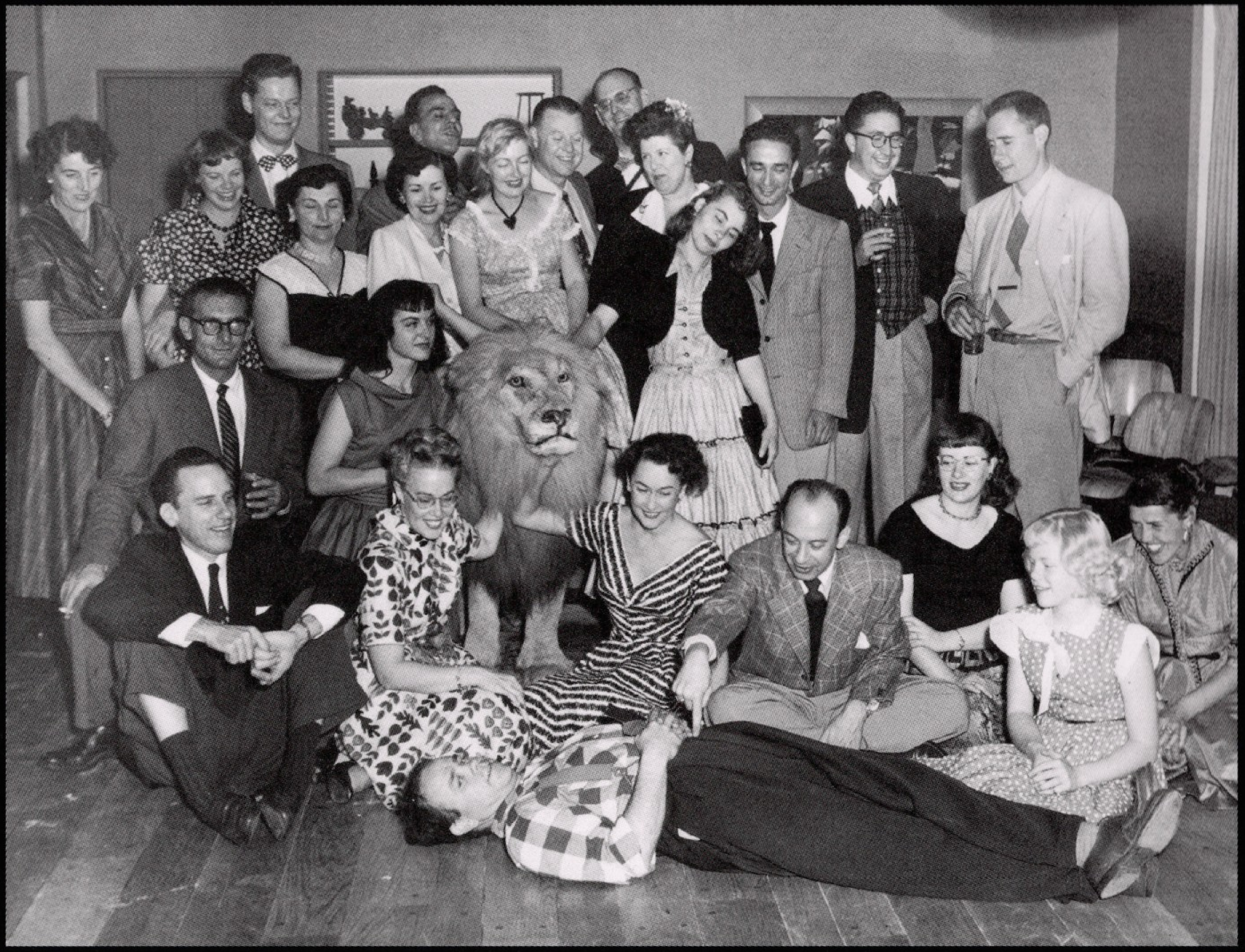
A story session for *Ballet-Oop* (1954, UPA), left to right: Bill Melendez, Jules Engel, Alan Zaslove, Frank Smith, T. Hee, C. L. Hartman, Bobe Cannon.



UPA founders David Hilberman, Zach Schwartz (facing back) and Stephen Bosustow (right) review the filmstrip panels for the studio's first project, *Sparks and Chips Get the Blitz* (1943).



A 1956 story session for *Petroushka*, left to right: Richard Punnett, John Wilson, Ed DeMattia, Chris Jenkyns, Dean Spille, and Bill Littlejohn.



The wrap party for *Toot Whistle Plunk and Boom* at Ward Kimball's house on June 6, 1953. Back row, left to right (only the film's artists are identified in the photo): Julius Svendsen, Henry Tanous, Charles Nichols, Ken O'Connor, Victor Haboush, X. Atencio, Eyvind Earle. Middle row: Tom Oreb. Bottom row: Art Stevens, Janice Kenworthy (leaf pattern dress), Marc Davis, Mary Schuster (black blouse). Lying down: Ward Kimball.

Playhouse Pictures tenth anniversary staff photo in 1962.

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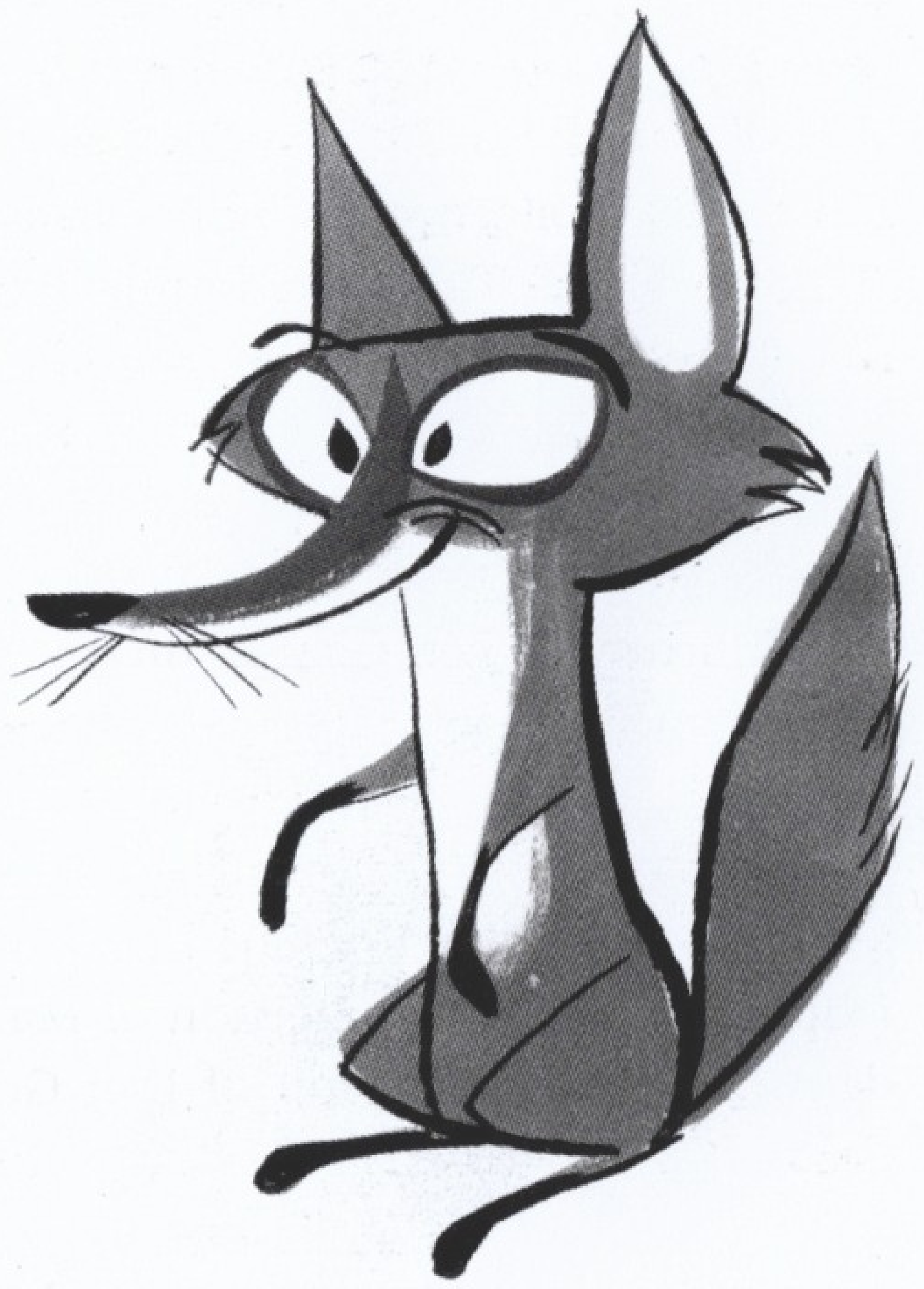

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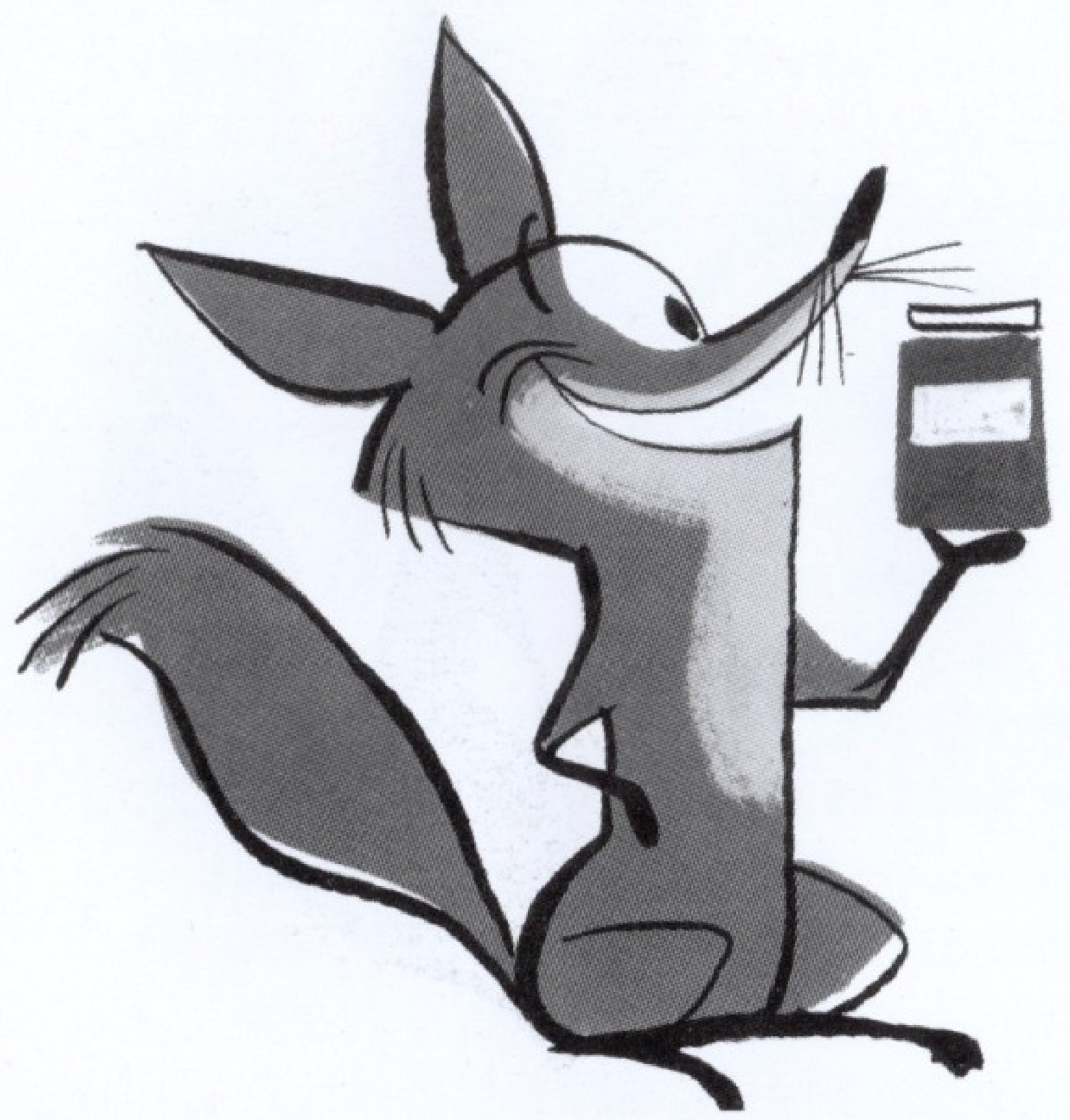

WELCH'S GRAPE JELLY COMMERCIAL
Designer: Tom Oreb

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